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THE

# CARELESS HUSBAND.

A COMEDY.

WRITTEN BY

COLLEY CIBBER, Esq.

TAKEN FROM

THE MANAGER'S BOOK,

AT THE

Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden.

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# DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

## COVENT-GARDEN,

### M E N.

Lord Morelove,	-	Mr. Farren.
Lord Foppington,	-	Mr. Lewes.
Sir Charles Easy,	-	Mr. Holman.

### W O M E N.

Lady Betty Modish,	-	Mrs. Abington.
Lady Easy.	-	Mrs. Pope.
Lady Graveairs,	-	Miss Plat.
Mrs. Edging,	•	Mrs. Mattocks.



# The Careless Husband.

ACT I. SCENE I. SCENE, Sir Charles Easy's

*Lodging. Enter Lady Easy alone.*

*L. Easy.* WAS ever woman's spirit, by an injurious husband, broke like mine? A vile, licentious man! must he bring home his follies too? wrong me with my very Servant! O, how tedious a relief is patience, and yet in my condition 'tis the only remedy: For to reproach him with my wrongs, is taking on myself the means of a redress, bidding defiance to his falshood, and naturally but provokes him to undo me. The uneasy thought of my continual jealousy may teize him to a fixt aversion; and hitherto, tho' he neglects, I cannot think he hates me.—It must be so, since I want power to please him, he never shall upbraid me with an attempt of making him uneasy,—My eyes and tongue shall yet be blind and silent to my Wrongs; nor would I have him think my virtue cou'd suspect him, till by some gross, apparent proof of his mis-doing he forces me to see—and to forgive it.

*Enter Edging hastily.*

*Edg.* O Madam!

*L. Easy.* What's the matter?

*Edg.* I have the strangest thing to shew your Ladyship—such a discovery—

*L. Easy.* You are resolv'd to make it without much ceremony, I find: What's the business, pray?

*Edg.* The business, madam I have not patience to tell you; I am out of breath at the very thoughts on't; I shall not be able to speak this half hour.

*L. Easy.* Not to the purpose I believe, but methinks you talk impertinently with a great deal of ease.

*Edg.* Nay, madam, perhaps not so impertinent as your Ladyship thinks; there's that will speak to the purpose, I am sure—A base man.

*(Gives a letter.)*

*L. Easy.* What's this! an open letter, whence comes it?

*Edg.* Nay, read it, madam, you'll soon guess—If these are the tricks of husbands keep me a maid still say I.

*L. Easy.* *(Looking on the Superscription.)* To Sir Charles Easy! Ha! too well I know this hateful hand—O my heart; but I must veil my jealousy, which 'tis not fit this Creature should suppose I am acquainted with. *(Aside.)*—This direction is to our master, how came you by it?

*Edg.* Why, madam, as my master was lying down, after he came in from hunting, he sent me into his dressing room to fetch his snuff-box out of his waistcoat pocket, and so I was searching for the box, madam, there I found this wicked letter from a mistress; which I had no sooner read, but, I declare it, my very blood rose at him again; methought I could have torn him and his to pieces.

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*L. Easy.* Intolerable ! this odious thing's jealous of him herself, and wants me to join with her in a revenge upon him—Sure I am fallen, indeed ! But 'twere to make me lower yet, to let her know I understand her. *[Aside.]*

*Edg.* Nay, pray, madam, read it, you'll be out of patience at it.

*L. Easy.* You are bold, mistress ; has my indulgence, or your master's good humour, flatter'd you into the assurance of reading his letters ? a liberty I never gave myself—Here—lay it where you had it immediately—shou'd he know of your sauciness, 'twould not be my favour that could protect you. *(Exit L. Easy.)*

*Edg.* Your favour ! Marry come up ! sure I don't depend upon your favour—It's not come to that, I hope—Poor creature—Don't you think I am my master's mistress for nothing—You shall find, madam, I won't be snapt up as I have been—Not but it vexes me to think she shou'd not be as uneasy as I. I am sure he is a base man to me, and I could cry my eyes out that she shou'd not think him as bad to her ev'ry jot. If I am wrong'd, sure she may very well expect it, that is but his wife—a conceited thing—the need not be so easy, neither—I am as handsome as she, I hope—here's my master—I'll try whether I am to be hurt'd by her, or no. *(Walks behind.)*

*Enter Sir Charles Easy.*

*Sir Cha.* So ! the day is come again—life but rises to another stage, and the same dull journey is before us—how like children do we judge of hapiness, when I was stinted in my fortune, almost every thing was a pleasure to me, because most things then being out of my reach, I had always the pleasure of hoping for 'em ; now fortune's in my hand, she's as insipid as an old acquaintance—It's mighty silly, faith—just the same thing by my wife, too ; I am told she's extremely handsome—nay, and have heard a great many people say she is certainly the best woman in the world—Why, I don't know but she may, yet I could never find that her person or good qualities gave me any concern—I in my eye the woman has no more charms than my mother.

*Edg.* Hum ! he takes no notice of me yet—I'll let him see, can take as little notice of him. *(She walks by him gravely, looks her about, she smug gl.)* Piny sir !

*Sir Cha.* A pretty peit air, that—I'll humour it—what's the matter, child ? are not you well ? kiss me, hussy.

*Edg.* No, the duce fetch me, if I do.

*Sir Cha.* Has any thing put the out of humour, love.

*Edg.* No, sir 'tis not worth my being out of humour at—If ever you have any thing to say to me again, I'll be burn'd.

*Sir Cha.* Somebody has bely'd me to thee

*Edg.* No, sir, 't's you have bely'd yourself to me—did not ask you when you first made a fool of me, if you would be ways constant to me ; and did not you say, I might be sure you would ; and here, instead of that, you are going on in your intrigue with my lady Graves—

*Sir. Cha.* So—

*Edg.* Pity, don't you suffer my lady to huff me every



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if I were her dog, or had no more concern with you—I declare I won't bear it, and she shan't think to huff me—for ought know I am as agreable as she; and tho' she dares not take any notice of your baseness to her, you shan't think to use me so—and so pray take your nasty letter—I know the hand well enough—for my part I won't stay in the family to be abused at this rate: I that have refus'd lords and dukes for your sake; and have you to know, sir, I have had as many blue and green ribbons after me, for ought I know, as would have made me a bala apron.

*Cha.* My Lady Graveairs! my nasty letter! and I won't stay in the family! Death!—I'm in a pretty condition!—What an unlimited privilege has this jade got from being a whore?

*Edg.* I suppose, sir, you think to use every body as you do your wife.

*Sir Cha.* My wife; hah! Come hither, Mrs. Edging; hark you, Drab.

*[Seizing her by the shoulder.]*

*Edg.* Oh!

*Sir Cha.* When you speak of my wife, you are to say your own, and you are never to speak of your lady to me in any regard of her being my wife—for look you, child, you are not her child, nor yet but mine, therefore I only give you leave to be saucy with me.—In the next place, you are never to suppose there is such person as my Lady Graveairs; and lastly, my pretty wife, how came you by this letter?

*Edg.* It's no matter, perhaps.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, but if you shou'd not tell me quickly, how are you sure I won't take a great piece of flesh out of your shoulder?—My dear.

*[Shakes her.]*

*Edg.* O lud! O lud! I will tell you, sir.

*Sir Cha.* Quick'y then—

*Edg.* Oh! I took it out of your pocket, sir.

*Sir Cha.* When?

*Edg.* Oh! this morning, when you sent me for your Snuff-

*Sir Cha.* And your ladyship's pretty curiosity has look'd it up, I presume—ha—

*(Again.)*

*Edg.* O lud! dear sir, don't be angry—indeed I'll never touch it again.

*Sir Cha.* I don't believe you will, and I'll tell you how you may be sure you never will.

*Edg.* Yes, Sir.

*Sir Cha.* By stedfastly believing, that the next time you offer me your letter, you will have your pretty white neck twisted behind you.

*Edg.* Yes, Sir.

*(Curt'ying.)*

*Sir Cha.* And you will be sure to remember every thing I said to you?

*Edg.* Yes, sir.

*Sir Cha.* And now, child, I was not angry with your person.

but your follies ; which, since I find you are a little sensible—don't b. wholly discourag'd—for I believe I—I shall have occasion for you again—

*Edg.* Yes, sir.

*Sir Cha.* In the mean time let me hear no more of your lady child.

*Edg.* No, Sir.

*Sir Cha.* Here she comes, be gone.

*Edg.* Yes, Sir—Oh ! I was never so frighten'd in my life. (*E*

*Sir Cha.* So ' good discipline makes good soldiers—*L. E* puzzles me to think, from my own carelessness, and my wife continual good humour, whether she really knows any thing the strength of my forces—I'll fift her a little.

*Enter Lady Easy.*

My dear, how do you do ? You are dress'd very early to-day are you going out ?

*L. E.* Only to church, my dear.

*Sir Cha.* Is it so late then ?

*L. E.* The bell has just rung.

*Sir Cha.* Well, child, how does Windsor air agree with you ? Do you find yourself any better yet ? or have you a mind to go to London again ?

*L. Easy.* No, indeed, my dear ; the air's so very pleasant, that if it were a piece of *le's* company, I cou'd be content to stay my days here.

*Sir Cha.* Pry'thee, my dear, what sort of company would please you ?

*L. Easy.* When business would permit it, yours ; and in your absence a sincere Friend, that were truly happy in an honest husband, to sit a cheerful hour, and talk in mutual praise of his condition.

*Sir Cha.* Are you then really very happy my dear ?

*L. Easy.* Why should you question it ? (*Smiling on him*)

*Sir Cha.* Because I fancy I am not so good to you as I should

*L. Easy.* Pshaw.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, the deuce take me if I don't really confess myself so bad, that I have often wonder'd how any woman of your sense, rank, and person, could think it worth her while to live so many useless good qualities.

*L. Easy.* Fye my dear.

*Sir Cha.* By my soul, I'm serious.

*L. Easy.* I can't boast of my good qualities, nor, if I cou'd do I believe you think 'em useless.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, I submit to you—Don't you find 'em so ? you perceive that I am one title the better husband for your being so good a wife ?

*L. Easy.* Pshaw ! you jest with me.

*Sir Cha.* Upon my life I don't—Tell me truly, was you never jealous of me ?

*L. Easy.* Did I ever give you any sign of it ?

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*Sir Cha.* Um—that's true—but do you really think I never give you occasion?

*L. Easy.* That's an odd question—but suppose you had?

*Sir Cha.* Why then, what good has your virtue done you, since all the good qualities of it could not keep me to yourself?

*L. Easy.* What occasion have you given me to suppose I have not kept you to myself?

*Sir Cha.* I given you occasion—Fye! my dear—you may be sure—I—look you, that is not the thing, but still a—(Death, what a blunder have I made)—a—still, I say, madam, you shan't make me believe you have never been jealous of me; not that you ever had any real cause, but I know women of your principles have more Pride than those that have no principles at all; and were there is Pride, there must be some jealousy—so that if you are jealous, my dear, you know you wrong me, and—

*L. Easy.* Why, then, upon my word, my dear, I don't know that I ever wrong'd you that way in my life.

*Sir Cha.* But suppose I had given a real cause to be jealous, how would you do then?

*L. Easy.* It must be a very substantial one that makes me jealous.

*Sir Cha.* Say it were a substantial one; suppose now I were well with a woman of your own acquaintance, that, under presence of frequent visits to you should only come to carry on an affair with me—Suppose now my lady Graveairs and I were great.

*L. Easy.* Wou'd I could not suppose it.

(*Aside.*)

*Sir Cha.* If I come off here I believe I'm pretty safe. (*Aside.*) Suppose, I say, my lady and I were so very familiar, that not only yourself, but half the town should see it.

*L. Easy.* Then I should cry myself sick in some dark closet, and forget my tears when you spoke kindly to me.

*Sir Cha.* The most convenient piece of virtue sure that ever wife was mistress of.

(*Aside.*)

*L. Easy.* But pray, my dear, did you ever think that I had any ill thought of my lady Graveairs?

*Sir Cha.* O fy! child; only you know she and I us'd to be a little free sometimes, so I had a mind to see if you thought there was any harm in it; but since I find you very easy, I think myself oblig'd to tell you, that upon my soul, my dear I have so little regard to her person, that the deuce take me, if I would not as soon have an affair with my own woman.

*L. Easy.* Indeed, my dear, I should as soon suspect you with one as t'other.

*Sir Cha.* Poor dear—shouldn't thou—give me a kiss.

*L. Easy.* Pshaw; you don't care to kiss me.

*Sir Cha.* By my soul I do—I wish I may die, if I don't think you a very fine woman.

*L. Easy.* I only wish you would think me a good wife. (*Kisses her.*) But pray, my dear, what has made you so strangely

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*Sir Cha.* Inquisitive—why—a—I don't know, one's always saying one foolish thing or another—Toll le roll. [*Sings and talks.*] My dear what! are we never to have any ball here? toll le roll. I fancy I could recover my dancing again, if I would practise. Toll loll lol! l!

*L. Easy.* This excess of carelessness to me excuses half his vices: If I can make him once think seriously—Time yet may be my friend.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, Lord Morelove gives his service—

*Sir Cha.* Lord Morelove! where is he?

At the Chocolate-house? he call'd me to him as I went by and bid me tell your honour he'll wait upon you presently.

*L. Easy.* I thought you had not expected him here again this season, my dear.

*Sir Cha.* I thought so too, but you see there's no depending upon the resolution of a man that's in love.

*L. Easy.* Is there a Chair?

*Serv.* Yes, Madam.

*Exit Servant.*

*L. Easy.* I suppose Lady Betty Modish has drawn him hither

*Sir Cha.* Aye, poor soul, for all his bravery, I'm afraid so.

*L. Easy.* Well, my dear, I han't time to ask my lord how he does now; you'll excuse me to him, but I hope you'll make him dine with us.

*Sir Cha.* I'll ask him. If you see lady Betty at prayers, make her dine too, but don't take any notice of my lord's being in town.

*L. Easy.* Very well! if I should not meet her there, I'll call at her lodgings.

*Sir Cha.* Do so.

*L. Easy.* My dear your servant.

*(Exit L. Easy.)*

*Sir Cha.* My dear, I'm yours.—Well! one way or other this woman will certainly bring about her business with me at last; for tho' she can't make me happy in her own person, she lets me be so intolerably easy with the women that can, that she has at least brought me into a fair way of being as weary of them too.

*Enter Servant and Lord Morelove.*

*Serv.* Sir my lord's come.

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles!

*Sir Cha.* My dear lord! this is an happiness undreamt of; I little thought to have seen you at Windsor again this season! I concluded, of course, that books and solitude had secur'd you 'till winter.

*L. Mor.* Nay, I did not think of coming myself, but I found myself not very well in London, so I thought—a—little hunting, and this air—

*Sir Cha.* Ha! ha! ha!

*L. Mor.* What do you laugh at?

*Sir Cha.* Only because you should not go on with your story; If you did but see how silly a man fumbles for a word

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he's a little ashamed of being in love, you would not wonder what I laugh at; ha! ha! ha!

*L. Mor.* Thou art a very happy fellow—nothing touches thee—always easy—Then you conclude I follow Lady Betty again.

*Sir Cha.* Yes, faith do I: And, to make you easy, my lord, I cannot see why a man that can ride fifty miles after a poor stag, should be ashamed of running twenty in chase of a fine woman, that, in all probability, will make him so much the better sport too.

(Embracing.)

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles, don't flatter my distemper, I own I still follow her: Do you think her charms have power to excuse me to the world.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, aye! a fine woman's excuse for any thing; we are all forced to be their fools, before we can be their favourites.

*L. Mor.* You are willing to give me hope, but I can't believe she has the least degree of inclination for me.

*Sir Cha.* I don't know that—I'm sure her pride likes you, and that's generally your fine lady's darling passion.

*L. Mor.* Do you suppose if I could grow indifferent, it would touch her?

*Sir Cha.* Sting her to the heart—Will you take my advice?

*L. Mor.* I have no relief but that. Had I not thee now and then to talk an hour, my life were insupportable.

*Sir Cha.* I am sorry for that, my lord; but mind what I say to you—But hold, first let me know the particulars of your late quarrel with her.

*L. Mor.* Why,—about three weeks ago, when I was last here at Windsor, she had for some days treated me with a little more reserve, and another with more freedom than I found myself easy at.

*Sir Cha.* Who was that other?

*L. Mor.* One of my lord Foppington's Gang,—he that sings himself among the women—What d'ye call him—He won't speak to a commoner when a lord's in company—Startup, that's his name.

*Sir Cha.* O! I have met him in a visit—but pray go on.

*L. Mor.* So, disputing with her about the conduct of women, I took the liberty to tell her how far I thought the err'd in her she told me I was yude, and that she would never believe any man could love a woman that thought her in the wrong in any thing she had a mind to, at least if he dar'd to tell her so—This provok'd me into her whole character, with as much spite and civil malice, as I have seen her bestow upon a woman of true beauty, when the men first teased her; so in the middle of my wisdom, she told me, she desired to be alone, that I would take my odious proud heart along with me, and trouble her no more—I—bow'd very low, and as I left the room vow'd I never would, and that my proud heart should never be humbled by the outside of a fine woman—About an hour after, I whipp'd into my chaise for London, and have never seen her since.



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*Sir Cha.* Very well, and how did you find your proud heart by that time you got to Hounslow?

*L. Mor.* I am almost ashamed to tell you—I found her so much in the right, that I curs'd my pride for contradicting her at all, and began to think, according to her maxim, that no woman could be in the wrong to a man that she had in her power.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! ha! Well, I'll tell you what you shall do. You can see her without trembling, I hope!

*L. Mor.* Not if she receives me well.

*Sir Cha.* If she receives you well, you will have no occasion for what I am going to say to you—first you shall dine with her.

*L. Mor.* How! where! when!

*Sir Cha.* Here! here! at two o'clock.

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles!

*Sir Cha.* My wife's gone to invite her; when you see her first, be neither too humble nor too stubborn; let her see, by the ease in your behaviour, you are still pleas'd in being near her, while she is upon reasonable terms with you. This will either open the door of an *éclaircissement*, or quite shut it against you—and if she is still resolv'd to keep you out—

*L. Mor.* Nay if she insults me, then, perhaps, I may recover pride enough to rally her by an over-acted submission.

*Sir Cha.* Why, you improve, my lord; this is the very thing I was going to propose to you.

*L. Mor.* Was it, faith! hark you, dare you stand my me?

*Sir Cha.* Dare I! aye, to the last drop of assurance against all the insolent airs of the proudest beauty in Christendom.

*L. Mor.* Nay, then defiance to her—we too—thou hast inspir'd me—I find myself as valient as a flatter'd coward.

*Sir Cha.* Courage, my lord—I'll warrant we beat her.

*L. Mor.* My blood stirs at the very thought on't; I long to be engag'd.

*Sir Cha.* She'll certainly give ground, when she once sees you are thoroughly provok'd.

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles, thou art a friend indeed.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, my lord Foppington gives his service, and if your honour's at leisure, he'll wait on you as soon as he's dress'd.

*L. Mor.* Lord Foppington! Is he in town?

*Sir Cha.* Yes—I heard last night he was come. Give my service to his lordship, and tell him I shall be glad he'll do me the honour of his company here at dinner. (*Exit. Serv.*) We may have occasion for him in our design upon lady Betty.

*L. Mor.* What use can we make of him?

*Sir Cha.* We'll see when he comes; at least there's no danger in him; not but I suppose you know he's your rival.

*L. Mor.* Pshaw! a coxcomb.

*Sir Cha.* Nay don't despise him neither—he's able to give you advice; for though he's in love with the same woman, yet to him she has not charms enough to give a minute's pain.



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*L. Mor.* Pr'ythee, what sence has he of love?

*Sir Cha.* Faith very near as much as a man of sence ought to have; I grant you he knows not how to value a woman truly deserving, but he has a pretty just esteem for most ladies about town.

*L. Mor.* That he follows, I grant you—for he seldom visits any of extraordinary reputation.

*Sir Cha.* Have a care, I have seen him at lady Betty Modish's

*L. Mor.* To be laughed at.

*Sir Cha.* Don't be too confident of that; the women now begin to laugh with him, not at him: for he really sometimes rallies his own humour with so much ease and pleasantry, that a great many women begin to think he has no follies at all, and those he has, have been as much owing to his youth and a great estate, as want of natural wit: 'Tis true, he is often a bubb'e to his pleasures, but he has always been wisely vain enough to keep himself from being too much the ladies humble servant in love.

*L. Mor.* There, indeed, I almost envy him.

*Sir Cha.* The easiness of his opinion upon the sex, will go near to pique you—We must have him.

*L. Mor.* As you please—but what shall we do with ourselves till dinner?

*Sir Cha.* What think you of a party at piquet?

*L. Mor.* O! you are too hard for me.

*Sir Cha.* Fye! fye! what! when you play with his grace?

*L. Mor.* Upon my honour he gives me three points.

*Sir Cha.* Does he? Why then you shall give me but two—  
Here, fellow, get cards. *Allons.* *(Exeunt.)*

## ACT II. SCENE I. *Lady Betty Modish's lodgings.*

*Enter Lady Betty, and Lady Easy meeting.*

*Betty.* O! my dear! I am overjoyed to see you, I am strangely happy to day; I have just received my new scarf from London, and you are most critically come to give me your opinion of it.

*L. Easy.* O, your servant, madam, I am a very indifferent judge, you know: what, is it with sleeves?

*L. Betty.* O, 'tis impossible to tell you what it is!—'Tis all extravagance, both in mode and fancy, my dear. Then such an enchanting slope from the elbow—something so new, so lively, so noble, so coquet and charming—but you shall see it my dear.

*L. Easy.* Indeed I won't my dear; I am resolv'd to mortify you for being so wrongfully fond of a trifle.

*L. Betty.* Nay now my dear you are ill-natur'd.

*L. Easy.* Why, truly, I'm half angry to see a woman of your sence, so warmly concerned in the care of her outside; for when we have taken our best pains about it, 'tis the beauty of the mind alone that gives us lasting value.

*L. Bet.* Ah! my dear! my dear! you have been a married woman to a fine purpose indeed, that knew so little of the taste

of mankind : take my word, a new fashion upon a fine woman, is often a greater proof of her value, than you are aware of.

*L. Easy.* That I can't comprehend, for you see among the men, nothing's more ridiculous than a new fashion. Those of the first sense are always the last that come into 'em.

*L. Bet.* That is, because the only merit of a man is his sense ; but doubtless the greatest value of a woman is her beauty ; an homely woman at the head of a fashion, would not be allowed in it by the men, and consequently not follow'd by the woman : so that to be successful in one's fancy, is an evident sign of one's being admir'd, and I always take admiration for the best proof of beauty, and beauty certainly is the source of power, as power in all creatures is the height of happiness.

*L. Easy.* At this rate you would rather be thought beautiful than good.

*L. Bet.* As I had rather command than Obey : The wisest homely woman can't make a man of sense of a fool, but the veriest fool of a beauty shall make an ass of a Statesman ; so that, in short, I can't see a woman of spirit has any business in this world but to dress—and make the men like her.

*L. Easy.* Do you suppose this is a principle the men of sense will admire you for ?

*L. Bet.* I do suppose, that when I suffer any man to like my person, he shan't dare to find fault with my principle.

*L. Easy.* But men of sense are not so easily humbled.

*L. Bet.* The easiest of any ; one has ten thousand times the trouble with a coxcomb.

*L. Easy.* Nay, that may be ; for I have seen you throw away more good humour, in hopes of a *tendresse* from my Lord Poppington, who loves all women alike, than would have made my Lord Morelove perfectly happy, who loves only you.

*L. Bet.* The men of sense, my dear, make the best fools in the world : their sincerity and good breeding throws them so intirely into one's power, and gives one such an agreeable thirst of using them ill, to shew that power—'tis impossible not to quench it.

*L. Easy.* But methinks, my Lord Morelove's manner to you might move any woman to a kinder sense of his merit.

*L. Bet.* Aye ! but would it not be hard, my dear, for a poor weak woman to have a man of his quality and reputation in her power, and not let the world see him there ? Wou'd any creature sit new dress'd all day in her closet ? Cou'd you bear to have a sweet-fancy'd suit, and never shew it at the play, or the drawing-room ?

*L. Easy.* But one wou'd not ride in't, methinks, or harraß it out, when there's no occasion.

*L. Bet.* Pooh ! my Lord Morelove's a mere Indian damask, one can't wear him out ; o' my conscience I must give him to my woman at last ; I begin to be known by him : had not I best leave him off, my dear ? for (poor soul) I believe I have a little fretted him of late.

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*L. Easy.* Now 'tis to me amazing, how a man of his spirit can bear to be us'd like a dog for four or five years together—but nothing's a wonder in love; yet pray when you found you could not like him at first, why did you ever encourage him?

*L. Bet.* Why, what would you have me do? for my part, I could no more choose a man by my eye, than a slice; one must draw them on a little, to see if they are right to one's foot.

*L. Easy.* But I'd no more fool on with a man I could not like, than I'd wear a shoe that pinch'd me.

*L. Bet.* Aye, but then a poor wretch tells one, he'll widen em, or do any thing, and is so civil and silly, that one does not know how to return such a trifle, as a pair of shoes, or an heart, upon a fellow's hands again.

*L. Easy.* Well; I confess you are very happily distinguished among most women of fortune, to have a man of my Lord Morelove's sense and quality so long and honourably in love with you; for now-a-days one hardly ever hears of such a thing as a man of quality in love with the woman he would marry; to be in love now, is only having a design upon a woman, a modish way of declaring war against her virtue, which they generally attack first, by boasting up her vanity.

*L. Bet.* Aye, but the world knows, that is not the case between my lord and me.

*L. Easy.* Therefore I think you happy.

*L. Bet.* Now I don't see it; I'll swear I'm better pleas'd to know there are a great many foolish fellows of quality that take occasion to toast me frequently.

*L. Easy.* I vow I should not thank any gentleman for toasting me, and I have often wonder'd how a woman of your spirit could bear a great many other freedoms I have seen some men take with you.

*L. Bet.* As how, my dear? Come pr'ythee be free with me, for you must know, I love dearly to hear my faults—Who is't you have observ'd to be too free with me?

*L. Easy.* Why, there's my Lord Foppington; could any woman but you bear to see him with a respectful stare fall in her face, draw up his breath, and cry—Gad, you're handsome?

*L. Bet.* My dear, fine fruit will have flies about it; but poor things, they do it no harm: for if you observe, people are generally most apt to choose that, then flies have been busy with, ha! ha! ha!

*L. Easy.* But my Lord Foppington's married, and one would no fool with him for his lady's sake; it may make her uneasy, and—

*L. Bet.* Poor creature, her pride indeed makes her carry it off without taking any notice of it to me; tho' I know she hates me in her heart, and I can't endure it, since people, so I us'd to dine with her once a week, purely to give her disorder; if you had but seen when my lord and I fool'd a little, the creature look'd so ugly.

How you ————

———

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*L. Easy.* But I should not think my Reputation safe; my Lord Foppington's a man that takes often of his amours, but seldom speaks of favours that are refus'd him.

*L. Bet. Pithaw;* will any thing a man says make a woman less agreeable? Will his talking spoil one's complexion, or put one's hair out of order?—and for reputation, look you, my dear, take it for a rule, that as amongst the lower rank of people, no woman wants beauty that has fortune; so amongst people of fortune, no woman wants virtue that has beauty: but an estate and beauty join'd, are of an unlimited, nay, a power pontifical, make one not only absolute, but infallible—A fine woman's never in the wrong, or, if we were, 'tis not the strength of a poor creature's reason that can unfetter him—O! how I love to hear a wretch curse himself for loving on, or now add then coming out with a—

*L. Easy.* At this rate, I don't see you allow reputation to be at all essential to a fine woman.

*L. Bet.* Just as much, as honour to a great man. Indeed, my dear, that jewel reputation is a very fanciful business! one shall not see an homely creature in town, but wears it in her mouth as monstrously as the Indians do bobs at their lips, and it really becomes them just alike.

*L. Easy.* Have a care, my dear, of trusting too far to power alone: for nothing is more ridiculous than the fall of pride; and woman's pride at best may be suspected to be more a distrust, than a real contempt of mankind: for when we have said all we can, a deserving husband is certainly our best happiness; and I don't question but my Lord Morelove's merit, in a little time, will make you think so too; for whatever airs you give yourself to the world, I'm sure your heart don't want good-nature.

*L. Bet.* You are mistaken, I am very ill-natured, tho' your good humour won't let you see it.

*L. Easy.* Then to give me a proof on't, let me see you refuse to go immediately and dine with me, after I have promis'd Sir Charles to bring you.

*L. Bet.* Pray don't ask me.

*L. Easy.* Why?

*L. Bet.* Because to let you see I hate good-nature, I'll go without asking, that you mayn't have the malice to say I did you a favour.

*L. Easy.* Thou art a mad creature. [Ex. *arm in arm.*  
The SCENE changes to Sir Charles's lodgings, Lord Morelove and Sir Charles's at piquet.

*Sir Cha.* Come, my lord, one single game for the rout, and so have done.

*L. Mor.* No, hang 'm, I have enough of 'em; ill cards are the dullest company in the world—How much is it?

*Sir Cha.* Three parties.

*L. Mor.* Fifteen pounds—very well.

[While *L. Morelove* counts out his money, a servant gives



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*Sir Charles a letter, which he reads to himself.*

*Sir Cha.* [to the servant.] Give my service, say I have company dines with me, if I have time I'll call there in the afternoon—ha! ha! ha! *[Exit servant.]*

*L. Mor.* What's the matter—there— *[Paying the money.]*

*Sir Cha.* The old affair—my lady Graveairs.

*L. Mor.* O! Pr'ythee how does that go on?

*Sir Cha.* As agreeably as a Chancery suit: For now it's come to the intolerable plague of my not being able to get rid on't; as you may see— *[Giving the letter.]*

*L. Mor.* [Reads.] A very whimsical letter—Faith, I think she has hard luck with you; if a man were oblig'd to have a mistress, her person and condition seem to be cut out for the case of a lover: For she's a young, handsome, wild, well jointured widow—But what's your quarrel?

*Sir Cha.* Nothing—she sees the coolness happens to be first on my side, and her business with me now, I suppose, is to convince me, how heartily she's vex'd that she was not beforehand with me.

*L. Mor.* Her pride, and your indifference, must occasion a pleasant scene, sure; what do you intend to do?

*Sir Cha.* Treat her with a cold familiar air, till I pique her to forbid me her sight, and take her at her word.

*L. Mor.* Very gallant and provoking. *[Enter a Servant.]*

*Serv.* Sir, my lord Foppington— *[Exit.]*

*Sir Cha.* O—now, my lord, if you have a mind to be let into the mystery of making love without pain—here's one that's a master of the art, and shall declare to you—

*Enter Lord Foppington.*

my dear lord Foppington!

*L. Fop.* My dear agreeable! *Que je t'embrasse! pardi! Il a y cent Ans que je ne t'ay ven—* my lord, I am your Lordship's most obedient humble servant.

*L. Mor.* My lord, I kiss your hands—I hope we shall have you here some time; you seem to have laid in a stock of health to be in at the diversions of the place—You look extremely well.

*L. Fop.* To see one's friends look so, my lord, may easily give a vermeil to one's complexion.

*Sir Cha.* Lovers in hope, my lord, always have a visible brilliant in their eyes and air.

*L. Fop.* What dost thou mean Charles?

*Sir Cha.* Come, come, confess what really brought you to Windsor, now you had no business there?

*L. Fop.* Why two hours, and six of the best nags in Christendom, or the Devil drive me.

*L. Mor.* You make haste my lord.

*L. Fop.* My lord, I always fly when I pursue—But they are well kept indeed—I love to have creatures go as I bid 'em; you have seen 'em, Charles, but so has all the world; Foppington's long-tails are known in every road in England.

Sir Cha. Well, my lord, but how came they to bring you this road? you don't use to take these irregular jaunts without some designs in your head of having more than nothing to do.

L. Fop. Pshaw, pox! pr'ythee Charles, thou know'st I am a fellow *sans consequence*; be where I will.

Cha. Nay, nay, this is too much among friends, my lord; come, come,—we must have it, your real business here?

L. Fop. Why then, *entre nous*, there is a certain *Fille de joye* about the Court here that loves winning at cards better than all the fine Things I have been able to say to her—so I have brought an odd Thousand bill in my Pocket that I design, *à-tête*, to play off with her at Piquet, or so; and now the business is out.

Sir Cha. Ah! and a very good business too, my lord,

L. Fop. If it be well done, Charles—

Sir Cha. That's as you manage your cards, my lord.

L. Mor. This must be a woman of consequence, by the value you set upon her favours.

Sir Cha. O! nothing's above the price of a fine woman.

L. Fop. Nay, look you, gentlemen, the price may not happen to be altogether so high neither—For I fancy I know enough of the game, to make it but an even bet I get her for nothing.

L. Mor. How so, my lord?

L. Fop. Because, if she happen to lose a good sum to me, I shall buy her with her own money.

L. Mor. That's new, I confess.

L. Fop. You know, Charles, 'tis not impossible but I may be five hundred pounds deep with her—then bills may fall short, and the devil's in't if I want assurance to ask her to pay me some way or other.

Sir Cha. And a man must be a churl, indeed, that won't take a lady's personal security; hah, hah, hah.

L. Fop. Heh! heh, heh, thou art a devil, Charles.

L. Mor. Death, how happy is this coxcomb? (*Aside.*)

L. Fop. But to tell you the truth, gentlemen,—I had another pressing temptation that brought me hither, which was—my wife.

L. Mor. That's kind, indeed, my lady has been here this month; she'll be glad to see you.

L. Fop. That I don't know; for I design this afternoon to send her to London.

L. Mor. What, the same day you come, my lord? That would be cruel.

L. Fop. Aye, but it will be mighty convenient; for she is positively of no manner of no use in my amours.

L. Mor. That's your fault, the town thinks her a very deserving woman.

L. Fop. If she were a woman of the town, perhaps I shou'd think so too? but she happens to be my wife, and when a wife is once given to deserve more than her husband's inclinations can pay, in my mind she has no merit at all.

L. Mor. She's extremely well bred, and of a very prudent conduct.

L. Fop. Um—aye—the woman's proud enough.



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*L. Mor.* Add to this, all the world allows her handsome.

*L. Fop.* The world's extremely civil, my lord; and I should take it as a favour done to me, if they could find an expedient to unmarry the poor woman from the only man in the world that can't think her handsome.

*L. Mor.* I believe there are a great many in the world that are sorry 'tis not in their power to unmarry her.

*L. Fop.* I am a great many in the world's very humble servant, and whenever they find 'tis in their power, their high and mighty wisdoms may command me at a quarter of an hour's warning.

*L. Mor.* Pray, my lord, what did you marry for.

*L. Fop.* To pay my debts at play, and disinheret my younger brother.

*L. Mor.* But there are some things due to a wife.

*L. Fop.* And there are some debts I don't care to pay—to both which I plead husband, and my lord.

*L. Mor.* If I should do so, I should expect to have my own coach stop in the street, and to meet my wife with the windows up in a hackney.

*L. Fop.* Then would I put in bail, and order a separate maintenance.

*L. Mor.* So pay double the sum of the debt, and be married for nothing.

*L. Fop.* Now I think deferring a dun, getting rid of one's wife, are two the most agreeable sweets in the liberties of an English subject.

*L. Mor.* If I were married, I would as soon part from my estate, as my wife.

*L. Fop.* Now I would not, sun-burn me if I would.

*L. Mor.* Death! but since you are thus indifferent, my lord, why could you needs marry a woman of so much merit? could not you have laid out your spleen upon some ill-natured threw, that wanted the plague of an ill husband, and have let her alone to some plain, honest man of quality, that would have defery'd her.

*L. Fop.* Why faith, my lord, that might have been considered, but I really grew so passionately fond of her fortune, that, curie catch me, I was quite blind to the rest of her good qualities: for to tell you the truth, if it had been possible the old put of a peer could have toss'd me in t'other five thousand for 'em, by my consent, she should have relinquish'd her merit and virtues to any of her younger sisters.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, aye, my lord, virtues in a wife are good for nothing but to make her proud, and put the world in mind of husband's faults.

*L. Fop.* Right Charles: And, strike me blind, but the women of virtue are now grown such ideots in love, they expect of a man, just as they do of a coach-horse, that one's appetite, like t'other's flesh, should increase by seeing.

*Sir Cha.* Right, my lord, and don't consider, that *saunders cha pens bonillas* will never do with an English stomach.

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha, ha, to tell you the truth, Charles. I have known so much of that sort of eating, that I now think, for an hearty meal, no wild fowl in Europe is comparable to a joint of Banstead mutton.

*L. Mor.* How do you mean?

*L. Fop.* Why that, for my part, I had rather have a plain slice of my wife's woman, than my guts full of e'er an Ortolan Duchess in Christendom.

*L. Mor.* But I thought, my lord, your chief business now at Windsor had been your design upon a woman of quality.

*L. Fop.* That's true, my lord; tho' I don't think your fine Lady the best dish myself, yet a man of quality can't be without such things at his table.

*L. Mor.* O! then you only desire the reputation of an affair with her.

*L. Fop.* I think the reputation is the most inviting part of an amour with most women of quality.

*L. Mor.* Why so, my lord?

*L. Fop.* Why, who the Devil would run through all the degrees of form and ceremony, that lead one up to the last favour, if it were not for the reputation of understanding the nearest way to get over the difficulty?

*L. Mor.* But, my lord, does not the reputation of your being so general an undertaker frighten the women from engaging with you? for they say, no man can love but one at a time.

*L. Fop.* That's just one more than ever I came up to: For, stop my breath, if ever I loved one in my life.

*L. Mor.* How do you get 'em, then?

*L. Fop.* Why, sometimes as they get other people: I dress, and let them get me; or, if that won't do, as I got my title I buy 'em.

*L. Mor.* But how can you, that profess indifference, think it worth your while to come so often up to the price of a woman of quality.

*L. Mor.* Because you must know, my lord, that most of them begin to come down to reason; I mean those that are to be had, or some die fools; But with the wiser sort, 'tis not, so of late, so very expensive! now and then a *Partie Quatre*, a jaunt or two in a hack to an Indian house, a little China, an odd thing for a gown, or so, and in three days after, you meet her at the convenience of trying it *chez Mademoiselle d'Epingle*.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, aye, my lord, and when you are there, you know, what between a little chat, a dish of tea, *Mademoiselle's* good humour, and a *Petit chausson*, or two, the devil's in't if a man can't fool away the time, 'till he sees how it looks upon her by candle light.

*L. Fop.* Heh, heh! well said Charles, P'gad I fancy thee and

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I have sacrific'd many a reputation there—your great lady is as soon undress'd as her woman.

L. Mor. I could never find it so—the shame or scandal of a repulse always made me afraid of attempting a woman of condition.

Sir Cha. Ha, ha? I gad, my lord, you deserve to be ill us'd; your modesty's enough to spoil any woman in the world; but my lord and I understand the sex a little better; we see plainly that women are only cold, as some men are brave, from the modesty or fear of those that attack 'em.

L. Fop. Right, Charles,—a man should no more give up his heart to a woman, than his sword to a bully; they are both as insolent as the devil after it.

Sir Cha. How do you like that, my lord? (*Aside to L. Mor.*)

L. Mor. Faith, I envy him—But, my lord, suppose your inclination should stumble upon a woman truly virtuous, would not a severe repulse from such a one, put you strangely out of countenance?

L. Fop. Not at all, my lord—for if a man don't mind a box o' the ear in a fair struggle with a fresh country girl, why the deuce should he be concern'd at an impertinent frown for an attack upon a woman of quality?

L. Mor. Then you have no notion of a lady's cruelty.

L. Fop. Ha, ha! let me blood, if I think there's a greater jest in nature. I am ready to crack my guts with laughing, to see a senceless flirt, because the creature happens to have a little pride that she calls virtue about her, give herself all the insolent airs of resentment and disdain to an honest fellow, that all the while does not care three pinches of snuff if she and her virtue were to run with their last favours through the first regiment of guards—Ha, ha! it puts me in mind of an affair of mine, so impertinent—

L. Mor. O! that's impossible, my Lord—pray let's hear it.

L. Fop. Why I happen'd once to be very well in a certain man of quality's family, and his wife lik'd me.

L. Mor. How do you know she lik'd you?

L. Fop. Why, from the very moment I told her I lik'd her, she never durst trust herself at the end of a room with me.

L. Mor. That might be her not liking you.

L. Fop. My lord—women of quality don't use to speak the thing plain—but to satisfy you I did not want encouragement; I never came there in my life, but she did immediately smile, and borrow my snuff-box.

L. Mor. She lik'd your snuff at least—Well, but how did she use you.

L. Fop. By all that's infamous she jilted me.

L. Mor. How; jilt you?

L. Fop. Ay, death's curse, she jilted me.

L. Mor. Pray let's hear.

L. Fop. For when I was pretty well convinc'd she had a mind to me, I one day made her a hint of an appointment:

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upon which, with an insolent frown in her face, (that made her look as ugly as the devil,) she told me, that if ever I came thither again, her lord should know that she had forbidden me the house before:—Did you ever hear of such a Out?

*Sir Cha.* Intolerable.

*L. Mer.* But how did her answer agree with you?

*L. Pop.* O, passionately well; for I star'd full in her face, and burst out a laughing; at which she turn'd upon her heel, and gave a crack with her fan like a coach-whip, and bridled out of the room with the air and complexion of an incens'd turkey cock.

(*A servant whispers Sir Charles.*)

*L. Mer.* What did you then?

*L. Pop.* I—look'd after her, gap'd, threw up the sash, and fell a fingering out of the window—so that you see, my lord, while a man is not in love, there's no greater affliction in missing one's way to a woman.

*Sir Cha.* Aye, aye, you talk this very well, my lord; but now let's see how you dare behave yourself upon action—Dinner's serv'd, and the ladies stay for us—There's one within has been too hard for as brisk a man as yourself.

*L. Mer.* I guess who you mean—Have a care, my lord, she'll prove your courage for you.

*L. Pop.* Will she? then she's an undone creature. For let me tell you, gentlemen, courage is the whole mystery of making love, and of more use than conduct in war; for the bravest fellow in Europe may beat his brains out against the stubborn walls of a town—but

—“Women, born to be controll'd,

“Stoop to the forward, and the bold.

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III. SCENE I. *The SCENE continues.*

*Enter Lord Morelove and Sir Charles.*

*L. Mer.* O! Did not I bear up bravely?

*Sir Cha.* Admirably; with the best bred insolence in nature, you insulted like a woman of quality when her country-bred husband's jealous of her in the wrong place.

*L. Mer.* Ha, ha, did you observe, when I first came into the room, how carelessly she brush'd her eyes over me, and when the company saluted me, stood all the while with her face to the window? ha, ha,

*Sir Cha.* What astonish'd airs she gave herself, when you ask'd her, what made her so grave upon her old friends?

*L. Mer.* And whenever I offer'd any thing in talk, what affected care she took to direct her observation of it to a third person?

*Sir Cha.* I observed she did not eat above the rump of a pigeon all dinner time.

*L. Mer.* And how she colour'd when I told her, her ladyship had lost her stomach?

*Sir Cha.* If you keep your temper she's undone.

*L. Mer.* Provided she sticks to her pride, I believe I may,



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*Sir Cha.* Aye, never fear her; I warrant in the humour she is in, she would as soon part with her sense of feeling.

*L. Mor.* Well, what's to be done next?

*Sir Cha.* Only observe her motions: for by her behaviour at dinner, I am sure she designs to gail you with my lord Poppington: if so, you must even stand her fire, and then play my lady Graveairs upon her, whom I'll immediately pique and prepare for your purpose.

*L. Mor.* I understand you—the properest woman in the world too; for she'll certainly encourage the least offer from me in hopes of revenging her slights upon you.

*Sir Cha.* Right: and the very encouragement she gives you, at the same time will give me a pretence to widen the breach of my quarrel with her.

*L. Mor.* Besides, Charles, I own I am fond of any attempt that will forward a misunderstanding there; for your lady's sake: A woman so truly good in her nature, ought to have something more from a man, than bare occasions to prove her goodness.

*Sir Cha.* Why then, upon honour, my lord, to give you proof that I am positively the best husband in the world, my wife—never yet found me out.

*L. Mor.* That may be her being the best wife in the world: She, may be, won't find you out.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, if she won't tell a man of his faults, when she sees 'em, how the deuce should he mend 'em? but however, you see I am going to leave 'em off as fast as I can.

*L. Mor.* Being tir'd of a woman is indeed a pretty tolerable assurance of a man's not designing to fool on with her—Here she comes, and, if I don't mistake, brimfull of reproaches—You can't take her in a better time—I'll leave you.

*Enter Lady Graveairs.*

Your Ladyship, my most humble servant. Is the company broke up, pray?

*La. Gra.* No, my lord, they are just talking of Ballot; my lord Poppington has a mind to tally, if your lordship would encourage the table.

*L. Mor.* O madam, with all my heart; but sir Charles I know, is hard to be got to it; I'll leave your ladyship to prevail with him.

(*Exit L. Morelove.*)

*Sir Charles and Lady Graveairs salute coldly, and trifle some time before they speak.*

*L. Gra.* Sir Charles, I sent you a note this morning—

*Sir Cha.* Yes, madam, but there were some passages I did not expect from your ladyship; you seem to tax me with things that—

*L. Gra.* Look you, sir, 'tis not at all material, whether I tax'd you with any thing or no: I don't in the least desire to hear you clear yourself; upon my word, you may be very easy as to that matter; for my part, I am mighty well satisfied things as they are; all I have to say to you is, that you need

not give yourself the trouble to call at my lodgings this afternoon, if you shou'd have time, as you were pleas'd to send me word—and so your servant, fir, that's all— (Going.)

*Sir Cha.* Hold, madam.

*L. Gra.* Look you fir Charles, 'tis not your calling me back that will signify any thing I can assure you.

*Sir Cha.* Why this extraordinary haste, madam?

*L. Gra.* In short fir Charles, I have taken a great many things from you of late, that you know I have often told you I would positively bear no longer.—But I see things are in vain, and the more people strive to oblige people the less they are thank'd for it: And since there must be an end of one's ridiculousness one time or other, I don't see any time so proper as the present, and therefore, fir, I desire you'd think of things accordingly—your servant— (Going, he holds her.)

*Sir Cha.* Nay, madam, let's start fair, however; you ought at least to stay till I'm as ready as your ladyship; and then—if we must part—

Adieu ye silent grots, and shady groves;  
Ye soft amusements of our growing loves;  
*Affectedly,* Adieu ye whisper'd sighs that fann'd the fire,  
And all the thrilling joys of young desire.

*L. Gra.* O mighty well, fir: I am very glad we are at last come to a right understanding, the only way I have long wish'd for; not but I'd have you to know, I see your design thro' all your painted ease of resignation: I know you'd give your soul to make me uneasy.

*Sir Cha.* O fy, madam, upon my word, I would not make you uneasy, if it were in my power.

*L. Gra.* O dear fir, you need not take such care, upon my word; you'll find I can part with you without the least disorder.—I'll try at least; and so once more, and for ever, fir, your servant: Not but you must give me leave to tell you, as my last thought of you too, that I do think—you are a villain.

(Exit *hastily*.)

*Sir Cha.* O your very humble servant, madam—(Bowing low.) What a charming quality is a woman's pride, that's strong enough to refuse a man her favour's, when he's weary of 'em—Ah!

*Lady Graveairs returns.*

*L. Gra.* Look you, fir Charles—Don't presume upon the easiness of my temper: For to convince you that I am positively in earnest in this matter, I desire you would let me have what letters you have had of mine since you came to Windsor, and I expect you'll return the rest, as I will yours, as soon as we come to London.

*Sir Cha.* Upon my faith, madam, I never keep any; I always put snuff in 'em, and so they wear out.

*L. Gra.* Sir Charles I must have 'em, for positively I won't stir without 'em.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! then I must be civil, I see. (Aside.) Perhaps, madam, I have no mind to part with them—or you.



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L. Gra. Look you, fir, all those sort of things are in vain, now there's an end of every thing between us—if you say you won't give 'em, I must e'en get 'em as well as I can.

Sir Cha. Hah! that won't do then, I find. *(Aside.)*

L. Gra. Who's there? Mrs. Edging—Your keeping a letter, fir, won't keep me, I assure you.

*Enter Edging.*

Edg. Did your ladyship call me, madam?

L. Gra. Aye, child, pray do me the favour to fetch my scarf out of the dining room.

Edg. Yes, madam—

Sir Cha. O! then there's hope again.

*(Aside.)*

Edg. Ha! she looks as if my master had quarrell'd with her; I hope she's going away in a huff—she shan't stay for her scarf, I warrant her—This is pure.

*(Aside. Exit smiling.)*

L. Gra. Pray, fir Charles, before I go, give me leave now, after all, to ask you—why you have us'd me thus?

Sir Cha. What is it you call, usage, madam?

L. Gra. Why then, since you will have it, how comes it you have been so grossly careless and neglectful of me of late? Only tell me seriously wherein I have deserved this.

Sir Cha. Why, then, seriously, madam—

*Re-enter Edging with a scarf.*

We are interrupted—

Edg. Here's your ladyship's scarf, madam.

L. Gra. Thank you, Mrs. Edging—O law! pray will you let somebody get me a chair to the door.

Edg. Humph! She might have told me that before, if she had been in such haste to go—

*[Exit.]*

L. Gra. Now, fir.

Sir Cha. Then seriously, I say, I am of late grown to very lazy in my pleasures, that I am henceforth resoly'd to follow no pleasure that arises above the degree of amusement—and that women that expects I should make her my business; why like my business, is then in a fair way of being forgot:—When once she comes to reproach me with vows, and usage, and stuff. I had as lief hear her talk of bills, bonds, and ejectments; her passion becomes as troublesome as a law-suit, and I would as soon converse with my solicitor—In short, I shall never care fix-pence for any woman that won't be obedient—

L. Gra. I'll swear, fir, you have a very free way of treating people; I am glad I am so well acquainted with your principles, however—and you'd have me obedient—

Sir Cha. Why not? my wife's so, and I think she has as much pretence to be proud as your ladyship.

L. Gra. Lard is there no chair to be had I wonder?

*Enter Edging.*

Edg. Here's a chair, madam.

L. Gra. 'Tis very well, Mrs. Edging: Pray will you let somebody get me a glass of fair water?

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*Edg. Humph!* her huff's almost over, I suppose—I see he's a villain still. *(Exit.)*

*L. Gra.* Well, that was the prettiest fancy about obedience sure that ever was—certainly a woman of condition must be infinitely happy under the dominion of so generous a lover. But how came you to forget kicking, and whipping all this while? Methinks you should not have left so fashionable an article out of your scheme of government.

*Sir Cha.* Um! no, there's too much trouble in that, though I have known 'em of admirable use in the reformation of some humourful gentlewomen.

*L. Gra.* But one thing more and I have done—Pray what degree of spirit must the lady have, that is to make herself happy under so much freedom, order and tranquility?

*Sir Cha.* O! she must at least have as much spirit as your ladyship, or she'd give me no pleasure in breaking it.

*L. Gra.* No; that would be troublesome—You had better take one that's broken to your hand,—there are such souls to be hir'd, I believe; things that will rub your temples in an evening 'till you fall fast asleep in their laps. Creatures too that think their wages their reward; I fancy, at last, that will be the best method for the lazy passion of a marry'd man that has outliv'd his any other sense of gratification.

*Sir Cha.* Look you, madam—I have lov'd you very well a great while; now you wou'd have me love you better and longer, which is not in my power to do, and I don't think there's any plague upon earth like a dun that comes for more money than one's ever likely to be able to pay.

*L. Gra.* A dun! do you take me for a dun, sir? do I come a dunning to you? *(Walks in a heat.)*

*Sir Cha.* Hilt! don't expose yourself—here's company—

*L. Gra.* I care not—A dun! you shall see, sir, I can revenge an affront, tho' I despise the wretch that offers it—A dun! Oh! I could die with laughing at the fancy. *(Exit.)*

*Sir Cha.* So she's in admirable order—Here comes my lord, and I'm afraid in the very nick of his occasion for her.

*Enter Lord Morelove.*

*L. Mor.* O Charles, undone again! all's lost and ruin'd.

*Sir Cha.* What's the matter now?

*L. Mor.* I have been playing the fool yonder even to contempt; my senseless jealousy has confess'd a weakness I never shall forgive myself—She has insulted on it to that degree too—I can't bear the thought—O Charles! this devil still is mistress of my heart, and I could dash my brains to think how grossly too I have let her know it.

*Sir Cha.* Ah! how it would tickle her if she saw you in this condition! Hah, ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* Pr'ythee don't torture me! Think of some present ease, or I shall burst—

*Sir Cha.* Well, well, let's hear, pray—what has she done to you? ha, ha!

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*L. Mor.* Why ever since I left you she treated me with so much coolness and ill nature, and that thing of a lord with so much laughing ease, such an acquaintance, such a spiteful familiarity, that at the last she saw and triumph'd in my uneasiness.

*Sir Cha.* Well! and so you left the room in a pet? ha!

*L. Mor.* O worse, worse still; for at last, with half shame and anger in my looks, I thrust myself between my lord and her, press'd her by the hand, and in a whisper trembling begg'd her in pity of herself and me to shew her good humour only where she knew it was truly valued; at which she broke from me with a cold smile, sat her down by the peer, whisper'd him and burst into a loud laughter in my face.

*Sir Cha.* Ha, ha! then would I have given fifty pounds to have seen your face: Why, what in the name of common sense had you to do with humility? Will you never have enough o'n't? death! 'twas setting a lighted match to gunpowder to blow yourself up.

*L. Mor.* I see my folly now, Charles—but what shall I do with the remains of life she has left me?

*Sir Cha.* O throw it at her feet by all means, put on your tragedy face, catch fast hold of her petticoat, whip out your handkerchief, and in point blank verse, desire her one way or other, to make an end of the business. *(In a whining tone.)*

*L. Mor.* What a fool dost thou make me.

*Sir Cha.* I only shew you, as you come out of her hands, my lord

*L. Mor.* How conceivible have I behav'd myself?

*Sir Cha.* That's according as you bear her behaviour.

*L. Mor.* Bear it! no: I thank thee, Charles—thou hast wak'd me now; and if I bear it—What have you done with my lady Gravelairs?

*Sir Cha.* Your business, I believe—She's ready for you, she's just gone down stairs, and if you don't make haste after her, I expect her back again with a knife or a pistol, presently.

*L. Mor.* I'll go this minute.

*Sir Cha.* No, stay a little, here comes my lord: We'll see what we can get out of him first.

*L. Mor.* Methinks I now could laugh at her.

*Enter Lord Poppington.*

*L. Pop.* Nay, pry thee sir Charles, let's have a little of thee. We have been so chagrin without thee, that, stop my breath, the ladies are gone half asleep to church, for want of thy company.

*Sir Cha.* That's hard indeed, while your lordship was among em! Is lady Betty gone too?

*L. Pop.* She was just upon the wing—but I caught her by the snuff-box, and she pretends to stay to see if I'll give it her again, or no.

*L. Mor.* Death! 'tis that I gave her, and the only present

she ever would receive from me—Ask him how he came by it?

*(Aside to Sir Charles)*  
Sir Cha. Pr'ythee don't be uneasy—Did she give it you my lord?

L. Fop. Faith Charles, I can't say she did, or she did not, but we were playing the fool, and I took it—a la—Pshaw! I can't tell thee in French neither, but Horace touches it to a nicety 'twas *Pignus direptum male pertinaci*.

L. Mor. So! but I must bear it—if your lordship has a mind to the box, I'll stand by you in keeping of it.

L. Fop. My lord, I am passionately oblig'd to you, but I am afraid I cannot answer your hazarding so much of the lady's favour.

L. Mor. Not at all my lord: 'Tis possible I may not have her same regard to her frown that your lordship has.

L. Fop. That's a bite, I am sure—he'd give a joint of his little finger to be as well with her as I am. *(Aside.)* But here she comes, Charles stand by me—Must not a man be a vain coxcomb now, to think this creature followed one?

Sir Cha. Nothing so plain, my lord.

L. Fop. Flattering devil.

*Enter Lady Betty.*

L. Bet. Pshaw! my lord Foppington; Pr'ythee don't play the fool now, but give me my snuff-box—Sir Charles, help me to take it from him.

Sir Cha. You know I hate trouble, madam.

L. Bet. Pooh I you'll make me stay till prayers are half over now.

L. Fop. If you'll promise me not to go to church, I'll give it you.

L. Bet. I'll promise nothing at all, for positively I will have it.

L. Fop. Then comparatively I won't part with it, ha, ha!

*(Struggles with her.)*  
L. Bet. O you devil! you have kill'd my arm, Oh! well—if you'll let me have, it I'll give you a better.

L. Mor. O Charles, that has a view of distant kindness in it.

*Aside to Sir Charles*  
L. Fop. Nay, now I keep it superlatively—I find there's a secret value in it.

L. Bet. O dismal, upon my word, I am only aham'd to give it to you: Do you think I wou'd offer such an odious fancy'd thing to any body I had the least value for?

Sir Cha. Now it comes a little nearer, methinks it does not seem to be any kindness at all.

*Aside to L. Mor.*  
L. Fop. Why really, Madam, upon second view, it has not extremely the mode of a lady's utensil; Are you sure it never held any thing but snuff?

L. Bet. O! you monster.

L. Fop. Nay, I only ask, because it seems to me to have very



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much the air and fancy of Monsieur Smoakandlot's tobacco-box.

*L. Mor.* I can bear no more.

*Sir Cha.* Why, don't then; I'll step into the company, and return to your relief immediately. *(Exit.)*

*L. Mor.* *(To L. Bet.)* Come, madam, will your ladyship give me leave to end the difference—Since the slightness of the thing may let you bestow it without any mark of favour, shall I beg it of your ladyship?

*L. Bet.* O my lord, nobody sooner—I beg you give it my lord. *Looking earnestly on L. Pop. who smiling gives it to L. Mor. and then bows gravely to her.)*

*L. Mor.* Only to have the honour of restoring it to your lordship; and if there be any other trifle of mine your lordship has a fancy to, tho' it were a mistress, I don't know any person in the world that has so good a claim to my resignation.

*L. Pop.* O my lord, this generosity will distract me.

*L. Mor.* My lord, I do you but common justice: But from your conversation, I had never known the true value of the sex: You positively understand 'em the best of any man breathing, therefore I think every one of common prudence ought to resign to you.

*L. Pop.* Then positively your lordship's the most obliging person in the world, for I'm sure your judgment can never like any woman that is not the finest creature in the universe.

*(Bowing to L. Betty.)*

*L. Mor.* O! your lordship does me too much honour, I have the worst judgment in the world, no man has been more deceived in it.

*L. Pop.* Then your lordship, I presume, has been apt to choose in a mask, or by candle light.

*L. Mor.* In a mask indeed, my lord, and of all masks the most dangerous.

*L. Pop.* Pray what's that, my lord?

*L. Mor.* A bare face.

*L. Pop.* Your lordship will pardon me, if I don't so readily comprehend how a woman's bare face can hide her face.

*L. Mor.* It often hides her heart, my lord, and therefore I think it sometime a more dangerous mask than a piece of velvet: That's rather a mark than a disguise of an ill woman: But the mischiefs skulking behind a beautiful form, give no warning: they are always sure, fatal, and innumerable.

*L. Bet.* O barbarous aspersions! My lord Poppington have you nothing to say for the poor women?

*L. Pop.* I must confess, madam nothing of this nature ever happened in my course of amours; I always judge the beautiful form of a woman to be the most agreeable part of her composition, and when once a lady does me the honour to toss to my arms, I think myself obliged in good-nature, not to care about the rest of her equipage.

L. Bet. Why aye, my Lord, there's some good humour in that now.

L. Mor. He's happy in a plain *English* stomach, Madam, I could recommend a dish that's perfectly to your Lordship's gout, where beauty is the only sauce to it.

L. Bet. So!

L. Pop. My Lord, when my wine's right, I never care it should be zested.

L. Mor. I know some Ladies would thank you for that opinion.

L. Bet. My Lord *Morelove*'s really grown such a churl to the women, I don't only think he is not, but can't conceive how he ever could be in Love.

L. Mor. Upon my word, Madam, I once thought I was.

[Smiling.]

L. Bet. Fye! fye! how could you think so? I fancy now you had only a mind to domineer over some poor creature and so you thought you were in Love; ha! ha!

L. Mor. The Lady I lov'd, Madam, grew so unfortunate in her conduct, that she at last brought me to treat her with the same indifference and civility as I now pay your Ladyship.

L. Bet. And ten to one, just at that time she never thought you such tolerable company.

L. Mor. That I can't say, Madam, for at that time she grew so affected, there was no judging of her thoughts at all.

[Mimicking her.]

L. Bet. What, and so you left the poor Lady! O you inconsistent creature!

L. Mor. No, Madam, to have lov'd her on had been inconsistency; for she was never two hours together the same woman.

L. Bet. L. Mor. *seem to talk.*

L. Pop. [Aside.] Ha! ha! ha! I see he has a mind to abuse her; so I'll ev'n give him an opportunity of doing his business with her at once for ever — My Lord, I perceive your Lordship's going to be good company to the Lady, and for her sake I don't think it good manners in me to disturb you —

Enter Sir Charles.

Sir Cha. My Lord *Foppington*!

L. Pop. O *Charles*! I was just wanting the — Hark the — I have three thousand secrets for thee — I have made such discoveries! to tell thee all in one word — *Morelove*'s as jealous of me as the Devil! he! he! he!

Sir Cha. Is't possible? has she given him any occasion?

L. Pop. Only rally'd him to death upon my account; she told me within just now, she'd use him like a dog, and begged me to draw off for an opportunity.

Sir Cha. O! keep in while she's gone, and she's your own my Lord.

L. Pop. I can't tell that, *Charles*, but I am sure she's fair unharbour'd, and when once I throw off my inclinations,



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ually follow 'em 'till the game has enough on't; and between  
ee and I she's pretty well blown too, she can't stand long, I  
lieve, for, curse catch me, if I have not rid down half a  
ousand pounds after her already.

Sir Cha. What do you mean?

L. Pop. I have lost five hundred to her at piquet since  
nner.

Sir Cha. You are a fortunate man, faith; you are resolv'd  
ot to be thrown out, I see.

L. Pop. Hang it! What should a man come out for, if he  
ee not keep up to the sport?

Sir Cha. Well push'd, my Lord.

L. Pop. *Tayo!* have at her —

Sir Cha. Down! down, my Lord — ah — 'ware hanches.

L. Pop. Ah! Charles [*embracing him.*] Pr'ythee let's ob-  
ve a little, there's a foolish cur, now I have run her to a  
nd, has a mind to be at her by himself, and thou shalt see  
e won't stir out of her way for him. [*They stand aside.*]

L. Mor. Ha! ha! Your Ladyship is very grave of a sudden,  
ou look as if your lover had insolently recovered his com-  
on senses.

L. Bet. And your Lordship is so very gay, and unlike your-  
lf, one wou'd swear you were just come from the pleasure  
making your mistress afraid of you.

L. Mor. No, faith, quite contrary — for do you know,  
aden, I have just found out, that upon your account I have  
ade myself one of the most ridiculous puppies upon the face  
the earth — I have upon my faith! — nay, and so extra-  
gantly such — ha! ha! ha! that it's at last become a jest  
en to myself; and I can't help laughing at it for the soul  
me, ha! ha! ha!

L. Bet. I want to cure him of that laugh now [*Aside.*] My  
ord, since you are so generous, I'll tell you another secret:  
n you know too, that I will find, (spite of all your great  
ldom and my contemptible qualities, as you are pleas'd  
w and then to call them :) Do you know, I say, that I  
under all this, you still love me with the same helpless  
ssion; and can your vast foresight imagine I won't use you  
ordingly, for these extraordinary airs you are pleas'd to  
ve yourself?

L. Mor. O by all means, Madam, 'tis fit you should, and  
expect it, whenever it is in your power: — confusion!

[*Aside.*]

L. Bet. My Lord, you have talk'd to me this half hour,  
thout confessing pain. [*Pauses and affects to gape.*] Only  
member it.

L. Mor. Hell and torments!

L. Bet. What did you say, my Lord?

L. Mor. Fire and furies!

L. Bet. Ha, ha! he's disorder'd — Now I am easy. — My

Lord *Foppington*, have you a mind to your revenge at pique?

*L. Fop.* I have always a mind to an opportunity of entertaining your Ladyship, Madam.

*L. Betty coquets with L. Fop.*

*L. Mor.* O *Charles* — The insolence of this woman might furnish out a thousand Devils.

*Sir Cha.* And your temper is enough to furnish out a thousand. Such women — Come away — I have business for you upon the Terras.

*L. Mor.* Let me but speak one word to her —

*Sir Cha.* Not a syllable — The tongue's a weapon you always have the worst at: For I see you have no guard, and she carries a devilish edge.

*L. Bet.* My Lord, don't let any thing I've said frighten you away: for if you have the least inclination to stay a rail, you know the old conditions; 'tis but your asking a pardon next day, and you may give your passion any liberty you think fit.

*L. Mor.* Daggers and death!

*Sir Cha.* Are you mad?

*L. Mor.* Let me speak to her now, or I shall burst —

*Sir Cha.* Upon condition you'll speak no more of her to any Lord, do as you please.

*L. Mor.* Pry'thee pardon me — I know not what to do.

*Sir Cha.* Come along — I'll let you to work I warrant you — Nay, nay, none of your parting ogles — Will you go?

*L. Mor.* Yes — and I hope for ever —

[*Exit Sir Cha. pulling away L. Mor.*]

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! ha! Did ever mortal monster set up for a lover with such unfortunate qualifications?

*L. Bet.* Indeed, my Lord *Morrel* has something strange singular in his manner.

*L. Fop.* I thought I should have burst to see the creature pretend to rally, and give himself the airs of one of us. But, run me thro', Madam, your Ladyship push'd like a fencing-master; that last thrust was a *Coup de Grace*, I believe. I'm afraid his honour will hardly meet your Ladyship in half again.

*L. Bet.* Not unless his second *Sir Charles*, keeps him better in practice, perhaps — Well, the humour of this creature has done me signal service to day; I must keep it up for fear of a second engagement. [Aside]

*L. Fop.* Never was poor wit so foil'd at his own weapon sure

*L. Bet.* Wit? had he ever any pretence to it?

*L. Fop.* Ha, ha! he has not much in love, I think, tho' he wears the reputation of a very pretty young fellow, among some sort of people; but, strike me stupid, if ever I could discover common sense in all the progress of his amours: He expects a woman should like him for endeavouring to convince

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her, that she has not one good quality belonging to the whole composition of her soul and body.

L. Bet. That, I suppose, is only in a modest hope, that she'll mend her faults, to qualify herself for his vast merit, ha, ha!

L. Fop. Poor *Morelove*, I see she can't endure him. [*Aside*.]

L. Bet. Or if one really had all those faults, he does not consider, that sincerity in love is as much out of fashion as sweet snuff; no body takes it now.

L. Fop. O! no mortal, Madam, unless it be here and there a Squire, that's making his lawful court to the cherry-cheek charms of my Lord Bishop's great fat daughter in the country.

L. Bet. O what a surfeiting couple has he put together—

[*Throwing her Hand carelessly upon his.*]

L. Fop. Fond of me, by all that's tender—Poor fool, I'll give thee ease immediately. [*Aside*.]—But, Madam, you were pleas'd just now to offer me my revenge at piquet—Now here's no body within, and I think we can't make use of a better opportunity.

L. Bet. O! no! Not now, my Lord!—I have a favour I would fain beg of you first.

L. Fop. But time, Madam, is very precious in this place, and I shall not easily forgive myself if I don't take him by the forelock.

L. Bet. But I have a great mind to have a little more sport with my Lord *Morelove* first, and would fain beg your assistance.

L. Fop. O! with all my heart; and, upon second thoughts, I don't know but piquing a rival in public may be as good sport, as being well with a mistress in private: For, after all, the pleasure of a fine woman is like that of her own virtue, not so much in the thing, as the reputation of having it. [*Aside*.]—Well, Madam, but how can I serve you in this affair?

L. Bet. Why, methought, as my Lord *Morelove* went out, he shew'd a stern resentment in his look, that seem'd to threaten me with rebellion, and downright defiance: Now I have a great fancy, that you and I should follow him to the Terrass, and laugh at his resolution before he has time to put it in practice.

L. Fop. And so punish his fault before he commits it! ha, ha, ha!

L. Bet. Nay, we won't give him time, if his courage should fail, to repent it.

L. Fop. Ha, ha, ha! let me blood, if I don't long to be at it, ha, ha, ha!

L. Bet. O! 'twill be such diversion to see him bite his lips, and broil within, only with seeing us ready to split our sides in laughing at nothing! ha, ha!

L. Fop. Ha, ha! I see the creature does really like me! [*Aside*.] And then, Madam, to hear him hum a broken piece

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of a tune, in affectation of his not minding us — 'twill be, so foolish when we know he loves us to death all the while ha, ha!

L. Bet. And if at last his sage mouth should open in surly contradiction of our humour, then will we, in pure opposition to his, immediately fall foul upon every thing that is not gallant and fashionable: Constancy shall be the mark of age and ugliness, virtue a jest, we'll railly discretion out of doors, lay gravity at our feet, and only love, free love, disorder, liberty, and pleasure be our standing principles.

L. Fop. Madam, you transport me: For if ever I was obliged to nature for any one tolerable qualification, 'twas positively the talent of being exuberantly pleasant upon this subject --- I am impatient — my fancy's upon the wing already --- let's fly to him.

L. Bet. No no; stay till I am just got out; our going together won't be so proper.

L. Fop. As your Ladyship pleases, Madam — But when this affair is over, you won't forget that I have certain revenge due.

L. Bet. Aye! aye! after supper I am for you — Nay, you shan't stir a Rep, my Lord — [Seeing her to the Door.

L. Fop. Only to tell you, you have fix'd me yours to the last existence of my soul's eternal entity. —

L. Bet. O, your servant.

[Exit.

L. Fop. Ha, ha! stark mad for me, by all that's handsome! poor *Morelove*! That a fellow who has ever been abroad, should think a woman of her spirit is to be taken by a regular siege, when the surest way is to whisper the governor. — How can a coscomb give himself the fatigue of bombarding a woman's understanding, when he may with so much ease make a friend of her constitution — I'll see if I can shew him a little *French* play with Lady Betty — let me see — Aye, I'll make an end of it the old way, get her into piquet at her own lodgings — not mind one tittle of my play, give her every game before she's half up, that she may judge of the strength of my inclination by my haste of losing up to her price; then of a sudden, with a familiar leer, cry — Rat piquet — sweep counters, cards and money, all an the floor, & done — *Passez vite est faite.*

[Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE 1. *The Castle Terrace.*

*Enter Lady Betty, and Lady Easy.*

L. Easy. MY dear, you really talk to me as if I were your lover, and not your friend; or else I am so dull, that by all you've said I can't make the least guess at your real thoughts — Can you be serious for a moment?

L. Bet. Not easily: But I would do more to oblige you,



*L. Easy.* Then pray deal ingenuously, and tell me without reserve, are you sure you don't love my lord *Morlove*?

*L. Bet.* Then seriously.—I think not.—But because I won't be positive, you shall judge by the worst of my symptoms.—First, I own I like his conversation, his person has neither fault nor beauty—well enough—I don't remember I ever secretly wished myself married to him, or—that I ever seriously resolved against it.

*L. Easy.* Well so far you are tolerable safe.—But come—as to his manner of addressing you, what effect has that had?

*L. Bet.* I am not a little pleas'd to observe few men follow a woman with the same fatigue and spirit that he does me—am more pleas'd when he lets me use him ill, and if ever I have a favourable thought of him, 'tis when I see he can't bear that usage.

*L. Easy.* Have a care, that last is a dangerous symptom—he pleases your pride, I find.

*L. Bet.* Oh! perfectly: in that—I own no mortal ever can come up to him.

*L. Easy.* But now, my dear! now comes the main point—jealousy! Are you sure you have never been touch'd with it? Tell me that with a safe conscience, and then I pronounce you clear.

*L. Bet.* Nay, then I defy him; for positively I was never jealous in my life.

*L. Easy.* How madam! have you never been stirr'd enough, to think a woman strangely forward for being a little familiar in talk with him? Or are you sure his gallantry to another never gave you the least disorder? Were you never upon no accident, in an apprehension of losing him?

*L. Bet.* Hah! Why, madam—Bless me!—wh—wh—why sure you don't call this jealousy, my dear?

*L. Easy.* Nay, nay, that is not the business—Have you ever felt any thing of this nature, madam?

*L. Bet.* Lord! don't be so hasty, my dear—any thing of this nature—O lud! I swear I don't like it: dear creature bring me off here; for I am half frighted out of my wits.

*L. Easy.* Nay if you can't rally upon't, your wound is not over deep I'm afraid.

*L. Bet.* Well: that's comfortably said, however.

*L. Easy.* But come to the point—How far have you been jealous?

*L. Bet.* Why—O bless me! He gave the musick one night to my Lady Languish here upon the Terrace: and (tho' she and I were very good friends). I remember I cou'd not speak to her in a week for't—Oh!

*L. Easy.* Nay, now you may laugh if you can; for, take my word, the marks are upon you—But come—what else?

*L. Bet.* O nothing else, upon my word, my dear!

*L. Easy.* Well, one word more, and then I give sentence.



suppose you were heartily convinc'd; that he actually follow'd another woman?

*L. Bet.* But, pray, my dear, what occasion is there to suppose any such thing at all?

*L. Easy.* Guilty upon my honour.

*L. Bet.* Pshaw! I defy him to say, that ever I own'd any inclination for him.

*L. Easy.* No, but you have given him terrible leave to guess it.

*L. Bet.* If ever you see us meet again, you'll have but little reason to think so, I can assure you.

*L. Easy.* That I shall see presently; for here comes Sir Charles, and I'm sure my lord can't be far off.

*Enter Sir Charles.*

*Sir Cha.* Servant lady Betty—my dear, how do you do?

*L. Easy.* At your service, my dear—But pray what have you done with my Lord Morelove?

*L. Bet.* Aye, sir Charles, pray how does your pupil do? Have you any hopes of him? Is he docible?

*Sir Cha.* We'll, madam, to confess your triumph over me, as well as him, I own my hopes of him are lost. I offer'd what I cou'd to his instruction, but he's incorrigibly yours, and undone—and the news, I presume, does not displease your ladyship.

*L. Bet.* Fye, fye, sir Charles, you disparage your friend, I am afraid you don't take pains with him.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! I fancy, lady Betty, your good-nature won't let you sleep a night: Don't you love dearly to hurt people?

*L. Bet.* O! your servant; then without a jest, the man is so unfortunate in his want of patience, that, let me die, if I don't often pity him.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! Strange goodness—O that I were your lover for a month or two.

*L. Bet.* What then?

*Sir Cha.* I wou'd make that pretty heart's blood of yours ache in a fortnight.

*L. Bet.* Hugh—I should hate you; your assurance wou'd make your address intolerable.

*Sir Cha.* I believe it wou'd, for I'd never address you at all.

*L. Bet.* O! you clown you! [*Haling him with her fan.*]

*Sir Cha.* Why, what to do? to feel a diseas'd pride that's eternally breaking out in the affectation of an ill nature that—in my conscience I believe is—but affectation.

*L. Bet.* You, nor your friend have no great reason to complain of my fondness, I believe. Ha! ha! ha!

*Sir Cha.* [*Looking earnestly on her.*] Thou insolent creature! How can you make a jest of a man, whose whole life's but one continual torment from your want of common gratitude?

*L. Bet.* Torment! for my part, I really believe him as easy as you are.

*Sir Cha.* Poor intolerable affectation! You know the contrary, you know him blindly yours, you know your power,

and the whole pleasure of your life's the poor and low abuse of it.

*L. Bet.* Pray how do I abuse it—if I have any power.

*Sir Cha.* You drive him to extremes that make him mad, then punish him for acting against his reason: you've almost turn'd his brain, his common judgment fails him; he's now, at this very moment, driven by his despair upon a project, in hopes to free him from your power, that I am sensible, and so must any one be that has his sense, of course must ruin him with you, for ever; and should he now suspect I offer'd but a hint of it to you, and in contempt of his design, I know he'd call my life to answer it: but I have no regard to men in madness, I rather choose for once to trust in your good-nature, in hopes the man, whom your unwary beauty had made miserable, your generosity wou'd scorn to make ridiculous.

*L. Bet.* Sir Charles, you charge me very home; I never had it in my inclination to make any thing ridiculous that did not deserve it. Pray, what is this business you think so extravagant in him?

*Sir Cha.* Something so absurdly rash and bold, you'll hardly forgive ev'n me that tell it you.

*L. Bet.* O fye! If it be a fault, sir Charles, I shall consider it as his, not yours. Pray what is it?

*L. Easy.* I long to know, methinks.

*Sir Cha.* You may be sure he did not want my dissuasions from it.

*L. Bet.* Let's hear it?

*Sir Cha.* Why this man, whom I have known to love you with such excess of generous desire, whom I have heard in his ecstasies praise on your beauty talk, till from the soft heat of his distilling thoughts the tears have fall'n—

*L. Bet.* O! sir Charles—

[*Blushing.*]

*Sir Cha.* Nay, grudge not, since 'tis past, to hear what was (tho' you condemn'd it) once his merit: But now I own that merit ought to be forgotten.

*L. Bet.* Pray, sir, be plain.

*Sir Cha.* This man, I say, whose unhappy passion has so ill succeeded with you, at last has forfeited all his hopes (into which, pardon me, I confess my friendship had lately flattered him,) his hopes of even deserving now your lowest pity or regard.

*L. Bet.* You amaze me—For I can't suppose his utmost malice dares assault my reputation—and what—

*Sir Cha.* No, but he maliciously presumes the world will do it for him; and indeed he has taken no unlikely means to make 'em busy with their tongues: for he is this moment upon the open terrace, in the highest publick gallantry with my Lady Graveairs. And to convince the world and me, he said, he was not that tame lover we fancied him, he'd venture to give her musick to-night: nay, I heard him, before my face, speak to one of the hautboys to engage the rest, and desired

they would all take their directions only from my Lady Gravelins.

*L. Bet.* My Lady Gravelins! truly I think my lord's very much in the right on't—for my part, sir Charles, I don't see any thing in this that's so very ridiculous, nor indeed that ought to make me think either the better or worse of him for it.

*Sir Cha.* Pshaw! Pshaw! Madam, you and I know 'tis not in his power to renounce you; this is but the poor disguise of a resenting passion, vainly ruffled to a storm, which the least gentle look from you can reconcile, at will, and laugh into a calm again.

*L. Bet.* Indeed, sir Charles I shan't give myself that trouble, I believe.

*Sir Cha.* So I told him, madam: are not all your complaints, said I, already owing to her pride; and can you suppose this public defence of it (which you know you can't make good too) won't incense her more against you?—That's what I'd have, said he, staring wildly; I care not what becomes of me, so I but live to see her piqued at it.

*L. Bet.* Upon my word, I fancy my lord will find himself mistaken—I shan't be piqued, I believe—I must first have a value for the thing I lose, before it piques me: piqued! ha! ha! ha!

*Sir Cha.* Madam, you've said the very thing I urg'd to him; I know her temper so well, said I, that tho' she doated on you, if you once stood out against her, she'd sooner burst than shew the least motion of uneasiness. [Disordered.]

*L. Bet.* I can assure you, sir Charles, my lord won't find himself deceived in your opinion—Piqued!

*Sir Cha.* She has it. [Aside.]

*L. Easy.* Atas, poor woman! how little do our passion make us!

*L. Bet.* Not but I would advise him to have a little regard to my reputation in this business; I would have him take heed of publickly affronting me.

*Sir Cha.* Right, madam, that's what I strictly warn'd him of; for, among friends, whenever the world sees him follow another woman, the malicious tea tables will be very apt to be free with your ladyship.

*L. Bet.* I'd have him consider that, methinks.

*Sir Cha.* But alas! Madam, 'tis not in his power to think with reason; his mad resentment has destroy'd ev'n his principles of common honesty: he considers nothing but a senseless proud revenge, which in his fit of lunacy 'tis impossible that either threats or danger can dissuade him from.

*L. Bet.* What! does he defy me, threaten me? then he shall see, that I have passions too, and know, as well as he, to stir my heart against any pride that dares insult me. Does he suppose I fear him? Fear the little malice of a slighted passion, that my own scorn has frung into a despised resentment! Fear him!

It provokes me to think he dare have such a thought!

*L. Easy.* Dear creature, don't disorder yourself so.

*L. Bet.* Let me but live to see him once more within my power, and I'll forgive the rest of fortune.

*L. Easy.* My dear, I am afraid you have provoked her a little too far.

*Sir Cha.* Oh! not at all—You shall see—I'll sweeten her, and she'll cool like a dish of tea.

*L. Bet.* I may see him with his complaining face again—

*Sir Cha.* I am sorry, madam, you so wrongly judge of what I've told you; I was in hopes to have stirr'd your pity, not your anger; I little thought your generosity would punish him for faults, which you yourself resolv'd he should commit—Yonder he comes, and all the world with him: might I advise you, madam, you should not resent the thing at all—I would not so much as stay to see him in his fault; nay, I'd be the last that heard of it: Nothing can sting him more, or so justly punish his folly as your utter neglect of it.

*L. Easy.* Come, dear creature, be persuaded, and go home with me; indeed it will shew more indifference to avoid him.

*L. Bet.* No, madam, I'll oblige his vanity for once, and stay to let him see how strangely he has piqued me.

*Sir Cha.* (*Aside*) O not at all to speak of; you had as good part with a little of that pride of yours, or I shall yet make it a very troublesome companion to you.

(*Goes from them, and whispers Lord Morelove.*)

*Enter Lord Foppington; a little after, Lord Morelove, and Lady Graveairs.*

*L. Pop.* Ladies, your servant—O! we have wanted you beyond reparation—such diversion!

*L. Bet.* Well; my lord, have you seen my Lord Morelove?

*L. Pop.* Seen him!—ha, ha, ha!—O, I have such things to tell you, madam—you'll die—

*L. Bet.* O pray let's hear 'em, I was never in a better humour to receive them.

*L. Pop.* Hark you.

*L. Mor.* So, she's engag'd already.

(*They whisper.*)

(*To Sir Charles.*)

*Sir Cha.* So much the better; make but a just advantage of my success, and she's undone.

*L. Pop.*

*L. Bet.*

Ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Cha.* You see already what ridiculous pains she's taking to stir your jealousy, and cover her own.

*L. Pop.*

*L. Bet.*

Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* O never fear me; for, upon my word, it now appears ridiculous even to me.

*Sir Cha.* And hark you—

(*Whispers L. Mor.*)

*L. Bet.* And so the widow was as full of airs as his lordship!



*Sir Cha.* Only observe that; and 't's impossible you can fail.

*L. Mor.* Dear Charles, you have convinced me, and I thank you. *(Aside.)*

*L. Grave.* My Lord Morelove, what do you leave us?

*L. Mor.* Ten thousand pardons, madam. I was but just—

*L. Grave.* Nay, nay, no excuses my lord, so you will but let us have you again.

*Sir Cha.* *(Aside to L. Gravenira.)* I see you have good humour, madam, when you like your company.

*L. Grav.* And you, I see, for all your mighty thirst of dominion, could stoop to be obedient, if one thought it worth one's while to make you so.

*Sir Cha.* Ha! Power would make her an admirable tyrant.

*L. Esy.* *(Observing Sir Charles and L. Gravenira.)* So there's another couple have quarrell'd too, I find—Those airs to my Lord morelove, look as if design'd to recover Sir Charles into jealousy: I'll endeavour to join the company, and it may be, that will let me into the secret. *(Aside.)* My Lord Foppington, I vow this is very uncomplaisant, to engross so agreeable a part of the company to yourself.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, my lord, this is not fair, indeed, to enter into secrets among friends!—Ladies, what say you? I think we ought to declare against it.

*L. Bet.* Well, ladies, I ought only to ask your pardon: my lord's excusable, for I would haul him into a corner.

*L. Fop.* I swear 'tis very hard, ho! I observe, two people of extreme condition can no sooner grow particular, but the multitude of both sexes are immediately up, and think their properties invaded—

*L. Bet.* Odious multitude—

*L. Fop.* Perish the Canaille.

*L. Grave.* O, my lord, we women have all reason to be jealous of lady Betty Modish's power.

*L. Mor.* *(To lady Betty.)* As the men, madam, all have of my Lord Foppington; beside, favourites of great merit discourage these of an inferior class for their prince's service: he has already lost you one of your retinue, madam.

*L. Bet.* Not at all, my lord; he has only made room for another: one must sometimes make vacancies, or their could be no preferments.

*L. Esy.* Ha! ha! Ladies favours, my lord, like places at Court, are not always held for life, you know.

*L. Bet.* No, indeed! if they were, the poor fine women would be always us'd like their wives, and no more minded than the business of the nation,

*L. Esy.* Have a care, madam; an undeserving favourite has been the ruin of many a prince's empire.

*L. Fop.* Ha! ha! Upon my soul, lady Betty, we must grow more discreet; for positively if we go on at this rate, we shall



have the world throw you under the scandal of constancy; and I shall have all the swords of condition at my throat for a monopolist.

*L. Mor.* O! there's no great fear of that, my lord; though the men of sense give it over, there will be always some idle fellows vain enough to believe their merit may succeed as well as your lordship's.

*L. Bet.* Or if they should not, my lord, cal-lovers, you know, need not fear being long out of employment, while there are so many well disposed people in the world——

—— There are generally neglected wives, stale maids, or charitable widows, always ready to relieve the necessities of a disappointed passion — and, by the way, hark you; Sir Charles——

*L. Mor.* [*Aside.*] So! she's assur'd, I see; for all her pains to hide it—— she wou'd hardly have glanc'd an affront at a woman she was not piqued at.

*L. Gra.* [*Aside.*] That wit was thrown at me, I suppose; but I'll return it.

*L. Bet.* [*Softly to Sir Charles.*] Pray, how come you all this while to trust your mistress so easily?

*Sir Cha.* One is not so apt, madam, to be alarm'd at the liberties of an old acquaintance, as perhaps your ladyship ought to be at the resentment of an hard-us'd, honourable lover.

*L. Bet.* Suppose I were alarmed, how does that make you easy?

*Sir Cha.* Come, come, be wise at last; my trusting them together, may easily convince you, that, (as I told you before) I know his addresses to her are only outward, and 'twill be your fault now, if you let him go on 'til the world thinks him in earnest; and a thousand busy tongues are set upon malicious inquiries into your reputation.

*L. Be.* Why, Sir Charles, do you suppose, while he behaves himself as he does, that I won't convince him of my indifference,

*Sir Cha.* But hear me, madam——

*L. Gra.* [*Aside.*] The air of that whisper looks as if the lady had a mind to be making her peace again; and 'tis possible, his worship's being so busy in the matter too, may proceed as much from his jealousy of my lord with me, as friendship to her; at least I fancy so: Therefore I'm resolv'd to keep her still piqued, and prevent it, tho' it be only to gall him—— Sir Charles, that is not fair to take a privilege you just now declared against in my lord Foppington.

*L. Mor.* Well observ'd, madam.

*L. Gra.* Beside, it looks so affected to whisper, when every body guesses the secret,

*L. Mor.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Bet.* O! madam, your pardon in particular: But 'tis possible you may be mistaken: The secrets of people that have

any regard to their actions, are not so soon grieved, as their's that have made a confident of the whole town.

*L. Pop.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Gra.* A coquette in her affected airs of disdain to a revolted lover, I'm afraid must exceed your ladyship in prudence, not to let the world see, at the same time, she'd give her eyes to make her peace with him: ha, ha!

*L. Mor.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Bet.* 'Twould be a mortification, indeed, if it were in the power of a fading widow's charms to prevent it; and the man must be miserably reduc'd, sure, that cou'd bear to live buried in woolen, or taken up with the metherly comforts of a swan-skin petticoat. Ha, ha!

*L. Pop.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Gra.* Widows, it seems, are not so squeamish to their interest; they know their own minds, and take the man they like, tho' it happens to be one that a forward, vain girl has disobligh'd, and is pining to be friends with.

*L. Mr. Nay.* though it happens to be one that confesses he once was fond of a piece of folly, and afterwards ashamed on't.

*L. Bet.* Nay, my lord, there's no standing against two of you.

*L. Pop.* No, faith, that's odds at tennis, my lord; not but if your ladyship pleases, I'll endeavour to keep your back-hand a little; though upon my soul you may safely let me up at the line: for, knock me down, if ever I saw a rest of wit, better play'd than the last, in my life—What say you, madam, shall we engage?

*L. Bet.* As you please, my lord.

*L. Pop.* Ha, ha, ha! *Allons! tout de bons-joues, mi lord.*

*L. Mr.* O pardon me, sir, I shall never think myself in any thing a match for the lady.

*L. Pop.* To you madam.

*L. Bet.* That's much, my lord, when the world knows you have been so many years teasing me to play the fool with you.

*L. Pop.* Ah! *Bien joue*—Ha ha ha!

*L. Mor.* At that game, I confess your ladyship has chosen a much properer person to improve your hand with.

*L. Pop.* To me, madam—my lord. I presume whoever the lady thinks fit to play the fool with, will at least be able to give as much envy as the wise person that had not wit enough to keep well with her when he was so.

*L. Gra.* O, my lord, both parties must needs be greatly happy; for I dare swear, neither will have any rivals to disturb 'em.

*L. Mor.* Ha, ha!

*L. Bet.* None that will disturb 'em, I dare swear.

*L. Pop.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Mor.*

*L. Gra.* } Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Bet.*

*Sr. Cha.* I don't know, ge 'e folks—but you are all in excellent good humour, methinks, I hope there's none of it affect'd

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*L. Easy.* I shou'd be loth to answer for any but my lord Poppington.

*L. Bet.* Mine is not, I'll swear.

*L. Mor.* Not mine, I'm sure.

*L. Gra.* Mine's sincere, depend upon't.

*L. Pop.* And may the eternal frowns of the whole sex doubly demme, if mine is not.

*L. Easy.* Well, good-people I am mighty glad to hear it. You have all perform'd extremely well; but if you please, you shall ev'n give over your wit now, while it is well.

*L. Bet.* (*To herself.*) Now I see his humour, I'll stand it out, if I were sure to die for't.

*Sir Cha.* You shou'd not have proceeded so far with my lord Poppington, after what I had told you. (*Aside to L. Bet.*)

*L. Bet.* Pray, Sir Charles, give me leave to understand myself a little.

*Sir Cha.* Your pardon, madam. I thought a right understanding wou'd have been for both your interests and reputation.

*L. Bet.* For his, perhaps.

*Sir Cha.* Nay, then, madam, it's time for me to take care of my friend.

*L. Bet.* I never, in the least, doubted your friendship to him in any thing that was to shew yourself my enemy.

*Sir Cha.* Since I see, Madam, you have so ungrateful a sense of my lord Morelove's merit, and my service, I shall never be ashamed of using my power henceforth to keep him intirely out of your ladyship's.

*L. Bet.* Was ever any thing so insolent! I could find in my heart to run the hazard of a downright compliance if it were only to convince him, that my power is not inferior to his.

(*To herself.*)

*L. Easy.* My lord Poppington, I think you generally lead the company upon these occasions. Pray will you think of some prettier sort of diversion for us, than parties and whippers?

*L. Pop.* What say you, ladies, shall we step and see what's done at the ballet-table?

*L. Bet.* With all my heart; lady Easy—

*L. Easy.* I think 'tis the best thing we can do, and because we won't part to night, you shall all sup where you din'd—what say you my lord?

*L. Mor.* Your ladyship may be sure of me, madam.

*L. Pop.* Aye, aye! we'll all come.

*L. Easy.* Then pray let's change parties a little. My lord Poppington, you shall squire me.

*L. Pop.* O, you do me honour, madam.

*L. Bet.* My lord Morelove, pray let me speak with you.

*L. Mor.* Me, madam?

*L. Bet.* If you please, my lord.

*L. Mor.* Ha, that look shot through me! What can this mean?

(*Aside.*)

*L. Bet.* This is no proper place to tell you what it is, but

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there is one thing I'd fain be truly answer'd in: I suppose you'll be at my lady Easy's by and by, and if you'll give me leave there—

L. Mor. If you please to do me that honour, madam, I shall certainly be there.

L. Bet. That's all, my lord.

L. Mor. Is not your ladyship for walking?

L. Bet. If your lordship dares venture with me.

L. Mor. O, madam! (*Taking her hand.*) how my heart dances, what heav'nly musick's in her voice, when softened into kindness. *[Aside.]*

L. Bet. Ha! his hand trembles—Sir Charles may be mistaken.

L. Pop. My lady Graveairs, you won't let Sir Charles leave us?

L. Gra. No, my lord, we'll follow you—stay a little.

*(To Sir Cha.)*

Sir Cha. I thought your ladyship design'd to follow 'em.

L. Gra. Perhaps I'd speak with you.

Sir Cha. But, madam, consider, we shall certainly be observ'd.

L. Gra. Lord, sir, if you think it such a favour. *(Exit hastily.)*

Sir Cha. Is she gone? let her go, &c.

*(Exit singing.)*

ACT V. SCENE. I. *The SCENE continues.*

*Enter Sir Charles, and Lord Morelove.*

Sir Cha. COME a little this way—my lady Graveairs has an eye upon me as I stole off, and I'm apprehensive will make use of any opportunity to talk withine.

L. Mor. O, we are pretty safe here—Well, you were speaking of lady Betty.

Sir Cha. Aye, my lord—I say, notwithstanding all this sudden change of her behaviour, I wou'd not have you yet be too secure of her: For, between you and I, since I told you, I have profess'd myself an open enemy to her power with you, 'tis not impossible but this new air of good humour may very much proceed from a little woman's pride, of convincing me you are not yet out of her power.

L. Mor. Not unlikely. But still, can we make no advantage of it?

Sir Cha. That's what I have been thinking of—out you—death! my lady Graveairs!

L. Mor. Ha! she will have audience, I find.

Sir Cha. There's no avoiding her—the truth is, I have ow'd her a little good-nature a great while—I see there's but one way of getting rid of her—I must ev'n appoint her a day of payment at last. If you'll step to my lodgings my lord, I'll just give her an answer, and be with you in a moment.

L. Mor. Very well, I'll stay there for you. *[Exit L. Mor.]*

*Enter Lady Graveairs on the other side.*

L. Gra. Sir Charles!

Sir Cha. Come, come, no more of these reproachful looks; you'll find, madam, I have detest'd better of you than your



jealously imagines—Is it a fault to be tender of your reputation—*fy-e, fy-e*—This may be a proper time to talk, and of my contriving too—you see I just now shook off my lord Morelove on purpose.

*L. Gra.* May I believe you?

*Sir Cha.* Still doubting my fidelity, and mistaking my discretion for want of good-nature.

*L. Gra.* Don't think me troublesome—for I confess 'tis death to think of parting with you; since the world sees for you I have neglected friends and reputation, have stood the little insults of disdainful prudes, that envy'd me perhaps your friendship; have borne the freezing looks of near and general acquaintance—since this is so—don't let 'em ridicule me too, and say my foolish vanity undid me; don't let 'em point at me as a cast mistress.

*Sir Cha.* You wrong me, to suppose the thought; you'll have better of me when we meet: when shall you be at leisure?

*L. Gra.* I confess I would see you once again, if what I have more to say prove ineffectual, perhaps it may convince me then, 'tis my interest to part with you—can you come to night?

*Sir Cha.* You know we have company and I'm afraid they'll stay too late—can't it be before supper?—what's o'clock now?

*L. Gra.* 'Tis almost six.

*Sir Cha.* At seven then be sure of me, 'till when I'd have you go back to the ladies to avoid suspicion, and about that time have the vapours.

*L. Gra.* May I depend upon you.

[*Exit.*]

*Sir Cha.* Depend on every thing—a very troublesome business, this—send me once fairly r d on't—if ever I am caught in an honourable affair again—a debt now that a little ready civility, and away, would satisfy, a man might bear with; but to have a rent-charge upon one's good nature, with an unconscionable long scroll arrears too, that would eat out the profits of the best estate in christendom—ah—intolerable! well! I'll ev'n to my lord, and shake off the thoughts on't.

[*Exit.*]

*The SCENE changes to Sir Charles's lodgings.*

*Enter Sir Charles, and Lord Morelove.*

*L. Mor.* Charles, you have transported me, you have made my part in the scene so very easy too, 'tis impossible I should fail in it.

*Sir Cha.* That's what I consider'd, for now the more you throw yourself into her power, the more I shall be able to force her into yours.

*L. Mor.* After all, (begging the ladies pardon,) your fine women, like bullies, are only stout when they know their men: a man of an honest courage may fright 'em into any thing! well, I am fully instructed, and will about it instantly—won't you go along with me?

*Sir Cha.* That may not be so proper; besides, I have a little business upon my hands.



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*L. Mor.* O, your servant, Sir. Good by to you—you mustn't

*Sir Cha.* My lord, your servant. (*Exit L. Mor.*) So, now to dispose myself, 'till 'tis time to think of my Lady Gravesend—Umph—I have no great maw to that business, methink: I don't think myself in humour enough to come up to the civil things that are usually expected in the making up of an old quarrel—(*Edging crosses the stage.*) There goes a warmer temptation by half—Ha—into my wife's bed-chamber too. I question if the jade has any great business there. I have a fancy she has only a mind to be taking the opportunity of no body being at home, to make her peace with me. Let me see—aye, I shall have time enough to go to her ladyship afterwards—Besides, I want a little sleep, I find. Your young fops may talk of their women of quality, but to me now, there's a strange agreeable convenience in a creature one is not obliged to say much upon these occasions. (*Going.*)

*Enter Edging.*

*Edg.* Did you call me, Sir?

*Sir Cha.* Ha—all's right—[*Aside.*]—Yes, Madam, I did call you. (*Sits down.*)

*Edg.* What would you please to have, Sir?

*Sir Cha.* Have! Why, I would have you be a good girl, and know when you are well us'd, hussy.

*Edg.* Sir, I don't complain of any thing, Iot I.

*Sir Cha.* Well, don't be uneasy—I am not angry with you now—Come and kiss me.

*Edg.* Lard, Sir—

*Sir Cha.* Don't be a fool, now—come hither.

*Edg.* Pshaw—

*Sir Cha.* No wry face—so—sit down. I won't have you look grave neither; let me see you smile, you jade, you. (*Goes to him.*)

*Edg.* Ha, ha

(*Laughs and blesses.*)

*Sir Cha.* Ah, you melting rogue.

*Edg.* Come, don't you be at your tricks now—Lord, can't you sit still and talk with one. I am sure there's ten times more love in that, and fifty times the satisfaction, people may say what they will.

*Sir Cha.* Well, now you're good, you shall have your own way. I am going to lie down in the next room; and, since you love a little chat, come and throw my night gown over me, and you shall talk me to sleep. (*Exit Sir Charles.*)

*Edg.* Yes, Sir—For all his way, I see he likes me still. (*Exit after him.*)

*The SCENE changes to the Terrace.*

*Enter Lady Betty, Lady Easy, and Lord Morland.*

*L. Mor.* Nay, Madam, there you are too severe upon him; for bating now and then a little vanity, my Lord Poplington does not want wit sometimes to make him a very tolerable woman's man.

*L. Bet.* But such eternal vanity grows tiresome.

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*L. E. f.* Come, if he were not so loose in his morals, vanity inethinks might be easily excus'd, considering how much 'tis in fashion: for pray observe what's half the conversation of most of the fine young people about town, but a perpetual affectation of appearing foremost in the knowledge of manners, new modes, and scandal: and in that I don't see any body comes up to him.

*L. Mor.* Nor I, indeed—and here he comes. Pray, Madam, let's have a little more of him: no body shews him to more advantage than your ladyship:

*L. Bet.* Nay, with all my heart; you'll second me, my lord.

*L. Mor.* Upon occasion, Madam—

*L. Easy.* Engaging upon parties, my lord?

*(Aside and smiling to L. Mor.)*

*Enter Lord Poppington.*

*L. Pop.* So, ladies—what's the affair now?

*L. Bet.* Why you were, my lord. I was allowing you a great many good qualities, but Lady Easy says you are a perfect hypocrite: and that whatever airs you give yourself to the women, she's confident you value no woman in the world equal to your own lady.

*L. Pop.* You see, Madam, how I am scandaliz'd upon your account. But it's so natural for a prude to be malicious, when a man endeavours to be well with any body but herself. Did you never observe the was pick'd at that before? Ha, ha!

*L. Bet.* I'll swear you are a provoking creature.

*L. Pop.* Let's be more familiar upon't, and give her disorder—ha, ha!

*L. Bet.* Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Pop.* Stop my breath, but Lady Easy is an admirable discoverer. Marriage is indeed a prodigious security of one's inclination. A man's likely to take a world of pains in an employment, where he can't be turn'd out for his idleness.

*L. Bet.* I vow, my lord, that's vastly generous to all the fine women: you are for giving them a despotic power in love, I see, to reward and punish as they think fit.

*L. Pop.* Ha, ha! Right, Madam, what signifies beauty without power? And a fine woman when she's married makes as ridiculous a figure, as a beaten general marching out of a garrison.

*L. Easy.* I'm afraid, Lady Betty, the greatest danger in your use of power, would be from a too heedless liberality: you would more spoil the man than his merit.

*L. Pop.* Pleased again, by all that's precious—Well, certainly to give envy is a pleasure inexpressible.

*(To L. Bet.)*  
*L. Bet.* Ha, ha!

*L. Easy.* Does not she shew him well, my lord? *(Aside to L. Mor.)*

*L. Mor.* Perfectly, and me to myself—For now I almost blush to think I ever was unequal at him.

*(To L. Easy.)*  
*L. Pop.* Lady Easy, I ask ten thousand pardons, I'm afraid I am rude all this while.

*Easy.* O not at all, my lord, you are always good company.

ny, when you please: not but in some things, indeed, you are apt to be like other fine gentlemen, a little too loose in your principles.

L. Pop. O, Madam, never to the offence of the ladies; I agree in any community with them; no body is a more constant churchman, when the fine women are there.

L. Easy. O fye, my lord, you ought not to go for their sakes at all. And I wonder, you that are for being such a good husband of your virtues, are not afraid of bringing your prudence into a lampoon or a play.

L. Bet. Lampoons and plays, Madam, are only things to be laugh'd at.

L. Pop. Odsso! ladies, the court's coming home, I see? shall not we make our bows?

L. Bet. O! by all means.

L. Easy. Lady Betty, I must leave you: for I am oblig'd to write letters, and I know you won't give me time after supper.

L. Bet. Well, my dear, I'll make a short visit, and be with you. (*Exit L. Easy.*) Pray what's become of my Lady Graveairs?

L. Mor. Oh, I believe she's gone home, Madam, she seem'd not to be very well.

L. Pop. And where's Sir Charles, my lord?

L. Mor. I left him at his own lodgings.

L. Bet. He's upon some ramble, I'm afraid.

L. Pop. Nay, as for that matter, a man may ramble at home sometimes.—But here comes the chaises, we must make a little more haste, Madam. [*Exeunt*

*The SCENE changes to Sir Charles's Lodgings.*

*Enter Lady Easy, and a Servant.*

L. Easy. Is your master come home?

Serv. Yes, Madam.

L. Easy. Where is he?

Serv. I believe, Madam, he's laid down to sleep.

L. Easy. Where's Edging? Bid her get me some wax and paper—say, it's no matter, now I think on it—there's some above upon my toilet. [*Exeunt severally.*

*The SCENE opens and it shows Sir Charles without his perwig, and Edging by him, both asleep, in two easy chairs.*

*Then enter Lady Easy, who starts and trembles, sometime unable to speak.*

L. Easy. Ha! protect me, Virtue, Patience, Reason—Teach me to bear this killing sight, or let Me think my dreaming senses are deceiv'd! For sure a sight like this, might raise the arm Of duty, ev'n to the breast of love! At least I'll throw this vizard of my patience off! Now wake him in his guilt! And barefac'd front him with my wrongs. I'll talk to him till he blushes, nay, till he frowns on me, perhaps—and then

I'm lost again—The ease of a few tears  
 Is all that's left to me—  
 And duty, too, forbids me to insult,  
 When I have vow'd obedience—Perhaps  
 The fault's in me, and Nature has not form'd  
 Me with the thousand little requisites  
 That warm the heart to love—  
 Somewhere there is a fault—  
 But Heav'n best knows what both of us deserve.  
 Ha! bare-headed, and in so sound a sleep—  
 Who knows, while thus expos'd to the unwholesome air,  
 But Heav'n offended, may o'ertake his crime,  
 And, in some languishing distemper, leave him  
 A severe example of its violated laws—  
 Forbid it mercy, and forbid it love.  
 This may prevent it. *[Takes a steinkirk off her neck, and lays*

*it gently on his head.*

And if he shou'd wake offended at my too busy care, let my  
 heart-breaking patience, duty, and my fond affection plead my  
 pardon. *(Exit.)*

*(After she has been out some time, a bell rings ;*  
*Edging wakes and stirs Sir Charles.*

*Edg. Oh!*

*Sir Cha. How now—what's the matter?*

*Edg. O, bless my soul, my lady's come home.*

*Sir Cha. Go, go then.*

*(Bell rings.)*

*Edg. O lud! My head's in such a condition too. (Runs to*  
*the glass) I am coming, Madam—O lud! Here's no powder*  
*neither—Here, Madam. (Exit.)*

*Sir Cha. How now? (Feeling the steinkirk upon his head.)*  
 What's this? How came it here? *(Puts on his wig.)* Did not  
 I see my wife wear this to day?—Death! she can't have  
 been here, sure—It could not be jealousy that brought her  
 home—for my coming was accidental—so too, I fear, might  
 her's—How careless have I been!—not to secure the door nei-  
 ther—'Twas foolish—it must be so—She certainly has seen me  
 here sleeping with her woman.—If so, how low an hypocrite to  
 her must that sight have proved me!—The thought has made  
 me despicable ev'n to myself. Now I reflect, this has not been  
 the first of her discoveries. How contemptible a figure must I  
 have made to her!—A crowd of recollected circumstances con-  
 firms me now, she has been long acquainted with my follies,  
 and yet, with what amazing prudence has she borne the secret  
 pangs of injur'd love, and wore an everlasting smile to me?  
 This asks a little thinking—something should be done. I'll  
 see her instantly, and be resolv'd from her behaviour. *(Exit.)*

*The SCENE changes to another room.*

*Enter Lady Easy and Edging*

*L. Easy. Where have you been, Edging?*

*Edg. Been, Madam—I—I—I came as soon as I heard  
 you ring, Madam.*



*L. Easy.* How guff confounds her—but she's below my thought.—Fetch my last new scarf higher—I have a mind to alter it a little—make haste.

*Edg.* Yes, Madam—I see she does not suspect anything. (*Exit.*)

*L. Easy.* Heigh ho—(*Sitting down.*) I had forgot—but I'm unfit for writing now. 'Twas an hard conflict, yet it's a joy to think it over: a secret pride, to tell my heart my conduct has been just. How low are vicious minds that offer injuries—how much superior innocence that bears 'em. Still there's a pleasure ev'n in the melancholy of a quiet conscience. Away my fears, it is not yet impossible—for while his human nature is not quite shook off, I ought not to despair.

*Re-enter Edging with a scarf.*

*Edg.* Here's the scarf, Madam.

*L. Easy.* So, sit down there—and, let me see—here—rip off all that silver.

*Edg.* Indeed, I always thought it would become your ladyship better without it. But now suppose, Madam, you carry'd another row of gold round the scollops, and then you take and lay this silver plain all along the gathers, and your ladyship will perfectly see, it will give the thing ten thousand times another air.

*L. Easy.* Pr'ythee don't be impertinent—do as I bid you.

*Edg.* Nay, Madam, with all my heart, your ladyship may do as you please.

*L. Easy.* This creature grows so confident; and I dare not part with her, lest he should think it jealousy. (*Aside.*)

*Enter Sir Charles.*

*Sir Cha.* So, my dear—What, at work—how are you employ'd, pray?

*L. Easy.* I was thinking to alter this scarf, here.

*Sir Cha.* What's amiss? methinks it's very pretty.

*Edg.* Yes, Sir, it's pretty enough for that matter, but my lady has a mind it should be proper too.

*Sir Cha.* Indeed!

*L. Easy.* I fancy plain gold and black would become me better.

*Sir Cha.* That's a grave thought, my dear.

*Edg.* O dear, Sir, not at all, my lady's much in the right; I am sure, as it is, it's fit for nothing but a girl.

*Sir Cha.* Leave the room.

*Edg.* Lord, sir—I can't, sir—I must stay to—

*Sir Cha.* Go—

(*Angrily.*)

*Edg.* (*Throwing down the work hastily, and crying, aside.*)—If ever I speak to him again, I'll be burn'd. (*Exit Edging.*)

*Sir Cha.* Sit still, my dear. I came to talk with you; and which you well may wonder at, what I have to say is of importance too, but 'tis in order to my hereafter always talking kindly to you.

*L. Easy.* Your words were never disobliging, nor can I charge you with a look that ever had the appearance of being unkind.

*Sir Cha.* The perpetual spring of your good humour, lets me



raw no merit from what I have appeared to be, which makes me curious now to know your thoughts of what I really am; and never having ask'd you this before, it puzzles me; nor can (my strange negligence consider'd) reconcile to reason, your first thoughts of venturing upon marriage with me.

*L. Easy.* I never thought it such a hazard.

*Sir Cha.* How cou'd a woman of your restraint in principles, delicateness, sense, and tender disposition, propose to lead a happy life with one (now I reflect) that hardly took an hour's pains, y'n before marriage, to appear but what I am—a loose, un-redeed wretch, absent in all I do, civil, and as often rude without design, unreasonably thoughtful, easy to a fault, and in my merit of praise, but carelessly good-natur'd? How shall I reason of your temper with having made so strange a choice?

*L. Easy.* Your own words may answer you.—Your having ever seem'd to be but what you really were; and thro' that carelessness of temper there still shone forth to me an undesigning honesty, I always doubted of in smoother faces. Thus, while I saw you took least pains to win me, you pleas'd and woo'd me most—nay, I have thought, that such a temper could never be deliberately unkind; or, at the worst, I knew that errors from want of thinking might be borne—at least when, probably, one moment's serious thought would end 'em. These were my worst of fears; and these, when weigh'd by growing love against my solid hopes, were nothing.

*Sir Cha.* My dear, your understanding startles me, and justly all my own in question. I blush to think I've worn so bright a jewel in my bosom, and till this hour, have scarce been curious to look upon its lustre.

*L. Easy.* You set too high a value on the common qualities of an easy wife.

*Sir Cha.* Virtues, like benefits, are double, when conceal'd; and I confess, I yet suspect you of an higher value far, than I have spoke you.

*L. Easy.* I understand you not.

*Sir Cha.* I'll speak more plainly to you. Be free and tell me, where did you leave this handkerchief?

*L. Easy.* Ha!

*Sir Cha.* What is't you start at? Your hear the question.

*L. Easy.* What shall I say? my fears confound me.

*Sir Cha.* Be not concern'd, my dear, be easy in the truth, and tell me.

*L. Easy.* I cannot speak; and I cou'd wish you'd not oblige me to it—'tis the only thing I ever yet refus'd you—and tho' I want reason for my wish let me not answer you.

*Sir Cha.* You will then be a reason; and since you are so generously tender of reproaching me, 'tis fit I should be easy in my gratitude, and make what ought to be my shame, my joy; and be therefore pleas'd to tell you now, your wondrous confidence has wak'd me to a sense of your disquiet past, and resolution never to disturb it more. And (not that I offer it as a

merit; but yet in blind compliance to my will) let me beg you would immediately discharge your woman.

*L. Easy.* Alas! I think not of her. O, my dear, distract me not with this excess of goodness. *(Weeping.)*

*Sir Cha.* Nay, praise me not, lest I reflect how little I have deserv'd it. I see you're in pain to give me this confusion—Come, I will not shock your softness by my untimely blurb for what is past, but rather soothe you to a pleasure at my sense of joy, for my recover'd happiness to come. Give then to my new-born love what name you please, it cannot, shall not, be too kind—O! it cannot be too soft for what my soul swells up with emulation to deserve—Receive me then entire at last, and take what yet no woman ever truly had—my conquer'd heart.

*L. Easy.* O the soft treasure!—O the dear reward of long-desiring love!—Now I am blest indeed to see you kind without the expence of pain in being so, to make you mine with easiness—Thus—thus to have you mine, is something more than happiness—'tis double life, and madness of abounding joy. But 'twas a pain intolerable to give you a confusion.

*Sir Cha.* O thou engaging virtue! But I'm too slow in doing justice to thy love: I know thy softness will refuse me; but remember I insist upon it, let thy woman be discharg'd this minute.

*L. Easy.* No, my dear, think me not so low in faith, to fear that what you've said, 'twill ever be in her power to do me future injury. When I can conveniently provide for her, I'll think on't: but to discharge her now, might let her guess at the occasion; and, methinks, I wou'd have our difference, like our endearments, be equally a secret to our servants.

*Sir Cha.* Still my superior every way—be it as you have better thought. Well, my dear, now I'll confess a thing that was not in your power to accuse me of; to be short, I own this creature is not the only one I have been to blame with.

*L. Easy.* I know she is not, and was always less concern'd to find it so, for constancy in errors might have been fatal to me.

*Sir Cha.* What is't you know, my dear? *(Surprised.)*

*L. Easy.* Come, I am not afraid to accuse you now—my Lady Graveairs.—Your carelessness, my dear, let all the world know it, and it would have been hard indeed, had it been only to me a secret.

*Sir Cha.* My dear, I'll ask no more questions, for fear of being more ridiculous; I do confess, I thought my discretion there had been a master-piece—How contemptible must I have look'd all this while!

*L. Easy.* You shan't say so.

*Sir Cha.* Well, to let you see I had some shame, as well a nature in me, I had writ this to my Lady Graveairs upon my first discovering that you knew I had wrong'd you—Read it.

*L. Easy.* *(Reads.)* "Something has happen'd, that prevents the visit I intended you, and I could gladly wish, you never wou'd reproach me if I tell you, 'tis utterly inconvenient that I should ever see you more."

This indeed was more than I had merited.

## THE CARELESS HUSBAND.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Sir Cha.* Who's there? Here—step with this to my Lady Griveairs. *(Seals the letter, and gives it to the servant.)*

*Serv.* Yes, Sir—Madam, my Lady Betty's come.

*L. Easy.* I'll wait on her.

*Sir Cha.* My dear, I'm thinking there may be other things my negligence may have wrong'd you in. Is there any part or circumstance in your fortune that I can change or yet make easier to you?

*L. Easy.* None, my dear, your good-nature never flinted me in that; and, now, methinks, I have less occasion than ever.

*Re-enter Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, my Lord Mortlove's come.

*Sir Cha.* I am coming. I think I told you of the design we had laid against Lady Betty.

*L. Easy.* You did, and I shou'd be pleas'd to be myself concern'd in it.

*Sir Cha.* I believe we may employ you. I know he waits for me with impatience. But, my dear, won't you think me tasteless of the joy you've given me, to suffer at this time any concern but you t' employ my thoughts?

*L. Easy.* Seasons must be obey'd; and since I know your friend's happiness depending, I cou'd not taste my own, shou'd you neglect it.

*Sir Cha.* Thou easy sweetness—O! what a waste on thy neglected love, has my unthinking brain committed! But time and future thirst of tenderness shall yet repair it all. The hours will come when this soft gliding stream that swells my heart, uninterrupted shall renew its course—

And like the ocean after ebb, shall move

With constant force of due returning love. *(Exit.)*

SCENE, another room. *Re-enter Lady Easy and Lady Betty.*

*L. Bet.* You've been in tears, my dear, and yet you look pleas'd too.

*L. Easy.* You'll pardon me, if I can't let you into circumstances: but be satisfied, Sir Charles has made me happy, ev'n to a pain of joy.

*L. Bet.* Indeed I'm truly glad of it, tho' I am sorry to find that any one who has generosity enough to do you justice, shou'd unprovok'd be so great an enemy to me.

*L. Easy.* Sir Charles your enemy!

*L. Bet.* My dear, you'll pardon me if I always thought him so, but now I am convinc'd of it.

*L. Easy.* In what, pray? I can't think you'll find him so.

*L. Bet.* O, Madam, it has been his whole business, of late to make an utter breach between my Lord Mortlove and me.

*L. Easy.* That may be owing to your usage of my lord. Perhaps he thought it would not disoblige you. I am confident you are mistaken in him.

*L. Bet.* O! I don't use to be out in things of this nature, I can see well enough: But I shall be able to tell you more—

when I have talk'd with my lord.

*L. Easy.* Here he comes; and because you shall talk with him—No excuses—for positively I will leave you together.

*L. Bet.* Indeed, my dear, I desire you will stay then; for I know you think now, that I have a mind to—to—

*L. Easy.* To—to—ha, ha, ha!

*L. Bet.* Well I remember this.

*Enter Lord Morelove.*

*L. Mor.* I hope then I don't fright you away, madam?

*L. Easy.* Not at all, my lord; but I must beg your pardon for a moment; I'll wait upon you immediately. *[Exit.]*

*L. Bet.* My lady Easy gone?

*L. Mor.* Perhaps, madam, in friendship to you; she thinks I may have deserv'd the coolness you of late have shewn me, and was willing to give you this opportunity to convince me, you have not done it without just grounds and reason.

*L. Bet.* How handsomely does he reproach me! But I can't bear that he should think I know it—*(Aside.)* My lord, whatever has pass'd between you and me, I dare swear that could not be her thoughts at this time! For when two people have appear'd profess'd enemies, she can't but think one will as little care to give, as t'other to receive a justification of their actions.

*L. Mor.* Passion indeed often does repeated injuries on both sides, but I don't remember in my heart of error I ever yet profess'd myself your enemy.

*L. Bet.* My lord, I shall be very free with you—I confess I do think now I have not a greater enemy in the world.

*L. Mor.* If having long loved you to my own disquiet, be injurious, I am content then to stand the foremost of your enemies.

*L. Bet.* O! my lord, there's no great fear of your being my enemy that way, I dare say—

*L. Mor.* There's no other my heart can bear to offend you now, and I forsake in that it will persist to my undoing.

*L. Bet.* Fye, fye, my lord, we know where your heart is well enough.

*L. Mor.* My conduct has indeed deserv'd this scorn, and, therefore 'tis but just I should submit to your resentment and beg (tho' I am assur'd in vain) for pardon. *(Kneels.)*

*Enter Sir Charles.*

*Sir Cha.* How, my lord!

*(L. Mor rises.)*

*L. Bet.* Ha! He here! this was unlucky. *(Aside.)*

*L. Mor.* O pity my confusion!

*(To L. Betty.)*

*Sir Cha.* I am sorry to see you can so soon forget yourself! Methinks the insult you have borne from that lady, by this time shou'd have warn'd you into a disgust of her regardless principles.

*L. Mor.* Hold sir Charles! While you and I are friends, I desire you would speak with honour of this lady—'Tis sufficient I have no complaint against her, and—

*L. Bet.* My lord, I beg you wou'd resent this thing no further. An enquiry like this, is better punish'd with our contempt; apparent malice shou'd only be laugh'd at.



THE CARELESS HUSBAND.

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*Sir. Cha.* Ha! ha! the old resource. Offers of any hopes to delude him from his resentment; and then you are sure to keep your word with him.

*L. Bet.* Sir Charles, to let you know how far I am above your little spleen, my lord, your hand from this hour—

*Sir Cha.* Phaw! Phaw! all design! all pique! meer artifice, and disappointed woman.

*L. Bet.* Look you, sir, not that I doubt my lord's opinion of me; yet—

*Sir Cha.* Look you, madam, in short, your word has been too often taken, to let you make up quarrels, as you used to do, with a soft look, and fair promise you never intended to keep.

*L. Bet.* Was ever such an insolence! He won't give me leave to speak.

*L. Mor.* Sir Charles!

*L. Bet.* No, pray, my lord, have patience; and since his malice seems to grow particular, I dare his worst, and urge him to the proof on't. Pray, sir, wherein can you charge me with breach of promise to my lord?

*Sir Cha.* Death, you won't deny it? How often, to piece up a quarrel, have you appointed him to visit you alone; and tho' you have promis'd to see no other company the whole day when he was come, he has found you among the laugh of noisy fops, coquets, and coxcombs, dissolutely gay, while your full eyes ran o'er with transport of their flattery, and your own vain power of pleasing! How often, I say, have you been known to throw away, at least four hours of your good humour upon such wretches, and the minute they were gone, grew only dull to him, sunk into a distasteful spleen, complain'd you had talk'd yourself into the head-ach, and then indulg'd upon the dear delight of seeing him in pain. And by that time you had stretch'd, and gap'd him heartily out of patience, of a sudden mo't importantly remember you had outstaid your appointment with my lady Fiddle-faddle; and immediately order your coach to the Park.

*L. Bet.* Yet, sir, have you done?

*Sir Cha.* No—tho' this might serve to show the nature of your principles. But the noble conquest you have gain'd at last over defeated sense of reputation too, has made your fame immortal.

*L. Mor.* How, sir?

*L. Bet.* My reputation?

*Sir Cha.* Aye, madam, your reputation—My lord, if I advance a falsehood, then resent it—I say, your reputation—It has been your life's whole pride of late to be the common toast of every public table, vain even in the infamous address of a married man, my lord Poppington; let that be reconcil'd with reputation, I'll now shake hands with shame, and bow me to the low contempt which you deserve from him; not but I suppose you'll yet endeavour to recover him. Now you find ill usage in danger of losing your conquest, 'tis possible you'll stop at nothing to preserve it.



*L. Bel.* Sir Charles— (*Walks disordered, and he after her.*  
*Sir Cha.* I know your vanity is insatiable, 'twill ev'n wound itself to feed itself; offer him a blank, perhaps to fill up with hopes of what nature he pleases, and part even with your pride to keep him.

*L. Bel.* Sir Charles, I have not deserv'd this of you. (*Bursting into tears.*

*Sir Cha.* Ah! True woman, drop him a soft dissembling tear, and then his just resentment must be hush'd of course.

*L. Mor.* O Charles! I can bear no more, those tears are too reproaching.

*Sir Cha.* Hift, for your life! (*A file, and then loud.*) My lord if you believe her, you're undone; the very next sight of my lord Poppington, would make her yet forswear all that she can promise.

*L. Bel.* My lord Poppington! Is that the mighty crime that is to condemn me then? You know I us'd him, but as a tool of my resentment, which you yourself, by a pretended friendship to us both, most artfully provok'd me to—

*L. Mor.* Hold, I conjure you, madam, I want not this conviction.

*L. Bel.* Send for him this minute, and you and he shall both be witnesses of the contempt and detestation I have for any forward hopes his vanity may have given him, or your malice would insinuate.

*Sir Cha.* Death! you would as soon eat fire, as soon part with your luxurious taste of folly, as dare to own the half of this before his face, or any one, that would make you blush to deny it to—Here comes my wife, how we shall see—Ha! and my lord Poppington with her—Now! now, we shall see this mighty proof of your sincerity—Now! my lord, you'll have a warning, sure, and henceforth know me for your friend indeed. (*Enter Lady Easy, and Lord Poppington.*

*L. Easy.* In tears, my dear! what's the matter?

*L. Bel.* O, my dear, all I told you's true; Sir Charles has shewn himself so inveterably my enemy, that if I believ'd I deserv'd but half his hate, 'twould make me hate myself.

*L. Pop.* Hark you, Charles, pray tell me what is this business?

*Sir Cha.* Why your's, my lord, for aught I know—I have made such a breach betwix't 'em—can't promise much for the courage of a woman; but if she holds, I am sure its wide enough; you may enter ten abreast, my lord.

*L. Pop.* Say'st thou so, Charles? Then I'll hold six to four I am the first man in the town.

*L. Easy.* Sure there must be some mistake in this; I hope he has not made my lord your enemy.

*L. Bel.* I know not what he has done.

*L. Mor.* Far be that thought! Alas! I am in to much fear myself, that what I have this day committed, advis'd by his mistaken friendship, may have done my love irreparable prejudice.

*L. Bel.* No, my lord, since I perceive his little arts have not prevail'd upon your good nature to my prejudice, I am

bound in gratitude, in duty to myself, and to the confession you have made, my lord, to acknowledge now, I have been to blame too.

*L. Mor.* Ha! is't possible, can you own so much? O my transported heart!

*L. Bet.* He says I have taken a pleasure in giving you uneasy—I own it—but 'twas when that uneasiness I thought proceeded from your love; and if you did love—'twill not be much to pardon it.

*L. Mor.* O let my soul, thus bending to your power, adore this soft descending goodness.

*L. Bet.* And since the piddy woman's slight, I have shewn you too often, have been public, 'tis fit at last the amends and reparation shou'd be so: Therefore what I offered to Sir Charles I now repeat before this company, my utter detestation of any past or future gallantry, that has or shall be offer'd by me, to your uneasiness.

*L. Mor.* O be less generous, or teach me to deserve it—Now blush Sir Charles, at your injurious accusation.

*L. Fop.* *Hab! Pard! voila quelque chose d'extraordinaire.*

*L. Bet.* As for my lord Foppington, I owe him thanks for having been so friendly an instrument of our reconciliation; for tho' in the little outward gallantry, I receiv'd from him, I did not immediately trust him with my design in it, yet I have a better opinion of his understanding, than to suppose he cou'd mistake it.

*L. Fop.* I am struck dumb with the deliberation of her assurance; and do not positively remember, that the nonchalance of my temper ever had so bright an occasion to shew itself before.

*L. Bet.* My lord, I hope, you'll pardon the freedom I have taken with you.

*L. Fop.* O, madam, don't be under the confusion of an apology upon my account; for in cases of this nature, I am never disappointed, but when I find a lady of the same mind two hours together—Madam, I have lost a thousand fine women in my time; but never had the ill manners to be out of humour with any one for refusing me, since I was born.

*L. Bet.* My lord, that's a very prudent temper.

*L. Fop.* Madam, to convince you that I am in an universal peace with mankind, since you own I have, so far, contributed to your happiness, give me leave to have the honour of completing it, by joining your hand where you have already offer'd up your inclination.

*L. Bet.* My lord, that's a favour I can't refuse you,

*L. Mor.* Generous, indeed my lord. (*L. Fop. joins their hands.*)

*L. Fop.* And, stop my breath, if ever I was better pleas'd since my first entrance into human nature.

*Sir Cha.* How now, my lord! what! throw up the cards before you have lost the game?

*L. Fop.* Look you, Charles, 'tis true, I did design to have play'd with her alone: But he that will keep well with the ladies

must sometimes be content to make one at a pool with me; and since I know I must engage her in my turn, I don't see any great odds in letting him take the first game with her.

*Sir Cha.* Wisely consider'd, my lord.

*L. Ber.* And now, sir Charles—

*Sir Cha.* And now, madam, I'll save you the trouble of a long speech; and in one word, confess, that every thing that I have done in regard to you this day was purely artificial—I saw there was no way to secure you to my lord Morelove, but by alarming your pride with the danger of losing him: And since the success must have by this time convinc'd you, that in love nothing is more ridiculous than an over-acted aversion; I am sure you won't take it ill, if we at last congratulate your good nature, by heartily laughing at the fright we had put you in: ha, ha, ha

*L. Eff.* He, he, ha, ha

*L. Ber.* Why—well I declare it now, I hate you worse than ever.

*Sir Cha.* Ha, ha, ha, and was it afraid they would take away it's love from it—poor lady Betty! ha, ha!

*L. Eff.* My dear, I beg your pardon; but 'tis impossible not to laugh when one's so heartily pleas'd.

*L. Ber.* Really, madam, I am afraid the humour of the company will draw me into your displeasure too; but if I were to expire this moment, my last breath would positively go out with a laugh. Ha, ha, ha!

*L. Ber.* Nay, I have deserv'd it all, that's the truth on't—but I hope, my lord, you were not in this design against me.

*L. Mor.* As a proof, madam, I am inclin'd never to deceive you more—I do confess I had my share in't.

*L. Ber.* You do, my lord—then I declare 'twas a design, one of other—the ball carried on, that ever I knew in my life; and (to my shame I own it) for aught I know, the only thing that could have prevail'd upon my temper: 'twas a foolish pride that has cost me many a bitten lip to support it—I wish we don't both repent, my lord.

*L. Mor.* Don't you repent without me, and we never shall.

*Sir Cha.* Well, madam, now the worst that the world can say of your past conduct, is that my lord had conspired; and you have tried it.

*Sir Cha.* Now, my dear, I find my happiness grow fast upon me—in all my experience of the sex, I found, even among the better sort, so much of folly, pride, malice, passion, and irresolution, that I concluded thee but of the lowest rank, and, therefore, scarce worthy my concern; but thou hast surpris'd me with so severe a proof of thy exalted virtue, it gives me wonder equal to my love—if then the unkindly thought of what I have been hereafter should intrude upon thy growing quiet, let this reflection teach thee to be easy.

Thy wrongs when greatest, most thy virtue prov'd;  
And from that virtue found, I blush'd and truly lov'd.

